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ABSTRACT

This document discusses research and thinking about several countries' experiences in providing early childhood education and services, and additionally, describes current early childhood education in the Australian states and territories. Following the first chapter's brief provision of background information about preschool education in Australia, the second chapter offers a research review. Research described focuses on the state of the art, the importance of early childhood, children at risk, language, cognitive development, teaching strategies, teachers, child/staff ratios and group size, Head Start and other U.S. programs, parent education, coordination of services, and Australian research studies. The third chapter describes the experience of countries other than Australia in terms of historical perspectives and current developments. Discussion closing this chapter explores several issues, including setting priorities, structuring children's early experiences, accountability, benefits of preschool, administration, parent involvement, and implications of women's changing role for early childhood services. The fourth chapter explores the Australian situation, providing a national overview and specific discussions concerning each state and territory. Additionally discussed are current practices, preschool curriculum, special groups, teachers and teacher education, aboriginal preschool education, preschool education in multicultural Australia, and the role of federal government in early childhood services. A brief depiction of possible future developments is provided in the fifth and final chapter. (RH)

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COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION:
A REVIEW OF POLICY, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

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PREFACE

This document has been prepared by the Education Planning Group of the Commonwealth Department of Education. While responsibility at the federal level for pre-school programs rests with the Department of Social Security, the Department of Education has an active interest in the educational aspects of pre-school services arising in particular from its close relationships with State and Territory education authorities which have direct responsibilities in pre-school education. The main emphasis is therefore on educational issues.

The Department believes that this synthesis of research and practice will be of special interest to those associated with:

- legislation relating to early childhood care and education;
- the formulation of a National Family policy - which has been the subject of a national conference organised by the Department of Social Security;
- the establishment of a National Data Base for participation in early childhood services - this is an ongoing exercise being pursued by State authorities, the Office of Child Care and the Bureau of Census and Statistics;
- developments in teacher education, especially those arising from the National Inquiry into Teacher Education;
- Australian Education Council - as a contribution to discussion following the report of an Australian Education Council Working Party on pre-school education;

- agencies and organisations involved in the area of research such as the Australian Council for Educational Research and tertiary institutions interested in developing research programs and priorities;

- State governments currently formulating and/or updating legislation relating to the licensing of children's services;

- the formulation of policies or programs related to young children and the training of staff to work with them.

A number of key questions in pre-school education are discussed but answers have not always emerged. The questions include:

1. What should be the role of pre-school education in relation to the family? In what ways can pre-school education and the family be of support to one another?

2. What should be the relationship between pre-school education and infant primary school education? In what areas is there more scope for educational continuity and mutual consultation?

3. How can pre-school education be evaluated? What criteria should be used? How can evaluation help to improve performance?

4. What should be the relationship between pre-school education and other pre-school services? How can more rational and efficient use of resources be achieved?

5. Areas of need:
   a) Who are the children in special need?
   b) How can they be identified?
   c) What should be the priorities in catering for them?
   d) What kinds of assistance are needed?

6. What areas of research should be given special encouragement and priority for funding?

7. What are the necessary qualifications in early childhood education for child care staff and pre-school teachers? What are the necessary maximum child/staff ratios in institutions providing early childhood education?

8. What age-groups should be provided for? What percentage of each age group should be provided for?

9. In what ways should parents and the community be involved in early childhood education?

10. What type of education and teaching should be provided in pre-schools?

It is hoped that this document will assist with such questions and that this will lead to further discussion as well as feedback to the Commonwealth Department of Education.

Principal responsibility for this document was carried by Miss J. Fry, Mrs J. Kennedy and Mr T. Francis. Thanks are due to several people both within and outside the Department for their comments and suggestions. Special thanks are due to the Australian Early Childhood Association (formerly the Australian Pre-School Association) for providing information - in particular Dr S. Plummer and later Miss J. Langham (who provided information about the Lady Gowrie Child Centres) in their capacity as Education Director of the APA. Valuable information was received from the Australian Education Council Working Party on Pre-school Education. There was consultation with the Department of Social Security which kindly offered some comments that have been used in the document.

CONTENTS

		Page
Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION		1
Chapter 2 - RESEARCH REVIEW		5
I	Introduction	5
	State of the Art	9
II	Importance of Early Childhood	10
	Environment and Development	10
	Reading and Writing	15
	Is there a Case for Special Provision of Pre-school Education?	15
	Home or Centre?	16
	Enrichment or Pushing?	17
	Working and Non-working Mothers	18
III	Children at Risk	20
IV	Language	23
	Disadvantage	23
	Language Development	26
	Language in the Early Childhood Centre	28
	Intensive Language Programs	29
	Bilingual Education	30
V	Cognitive Development	30

		Page
VI	Teaching Strategies	31
	The Home	31
	Traditional Pre-schools	34
	Structured Programs	34
	Montessori	35
	Comparing Programs	37
	Reading	38
	Play	39
	Educational Goals	41
VII	Teachers	41
VIII	Child/Staff Ratios and Group Size	42
IX	Head Start and other U.S. Programs	43
	Head Start Origins	43
	Head Start Claims	44
	Success of Head Start?	45
	Home Intervention and Parent Involvement	48
	Re-emerging Gains?	49
	Possible Gains?	53
X	Parent Education	56
XI	Coordination of Services	57
XII	Australian Research	58
	Lady Gowrie Child Centres	62
	Aboriginal Research	66
XIII	Discussion	72
XIV	Summary	75
Chapter 3 - EXPERIENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES		94
I	Introduction	94
	Historical Perspectives	95
	The Present Situation and Beyond	97

		Page
II	Current Developments Overseas	99
	Belgium	99
	Canada	100
	Denmark	101
	France	102
	Germany (Federal Republic)	105
	Italy	106
	The Netherlands	107
	New Zealand	108
	Norway	111
	Sweden	113
	United Kingdom	116
	United States	122
III	Discussion	126
	Setting Priorities	126
	Structuring Children's Early Experiences	127
	Accountability	128
	Benefits of Pre-school	128
	Administration	128
	Parent Involvement	130
	Implications for Early Childhood Services of Women's Changing Role	131
IV	Summary	133
Chapter 4 - THE AUSTRALIAN SITUATION		143
I	Introduction	143
II	Australian States and Territories	144
	Overview	144
	New South Wales	148
	Victoria	151
	Queensland	152

		Page
	South Australia	155
	Western Australia	157
	Tasmania	158
	Northern Territory	159
	Australian Capital Territory	160
III	Current Practices	162
IV	Pre-school Curriculum	163
V	Special Groups	164
VI	Teachers and Teacher Education	165
VII	Aboriginal Pre-school Education	170
VIII	Pre-school Education in a Multi-cultural Australia	172
IX	Federal Government Involvement in Early Childhood Services	179
	Introduction	179
	The Pre-school Education Movement	179
	The Child Care Movement	181
	Areas of Disagreement	186
	Federal Government Initiatives	189
	Parallel U.S. Experiences	193
X	Summary	196
Chapter 5 - POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS		207
Glossary		211

TABLES

		Page
TABLE 3.1	Fertility Rates (Live births per 100 women aged 15-44)	98
TABLE 4.1	Proportions of Children Aged 3-5 Years Attending Primary School and Pre-school in Australia: All States - 1966	145
TABLE 4.2	No. of Pre-school Centres/4 y.o. population/ % enrolled in the year before school entry/ Commonwealth Block Grant Allocation 1977/78	146
TABLE 4.3	No. of children in pre-schools x States	148

Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Pre-school education has frequently been a topic arousing lively interest and debate. In the last decade the situation of pre-school has changed quite markedly and correspondingly the nature of this interest and debate has also changed. At the end of the 1960s it was widely agreed that Australia did not have enough pre-school education. Throughout the country only a small minority of children in the appropriate age group were catered for. There was considerable variation in the extent of services provided among the States and Territories. Mothers of young children were joining the workforce in substantial numbers; the number of children of such mothers was far in excess of the number of places available in pre-school or day care centres. The demand for places was further strengthened by the widespread belief that pre-school education could do much to improve the social, emotional and intellectual development of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

1.2 The provision of both pre-school and day care facilities achieved new prominence in the first term of office of the Federal Labor Government which was elected in December 1972. Millions of additional dollars were directed to pre-school education and there was a rapid expansion of pre-school services in the States and Territories. This growth was relatively short-lived and by 1975 the funding of pre-school education, along with that of many other areas of government activity, was curtailed in response to an obvious downturn in the economy. There followed a change from the system whereby the Federal Government paid a major percentage of the salaries of agreed pre-school staff. Instead a new system of Commonwealth block grants was implemented as from January 1977.

1.3 The reduction in funding focused greater attention on the allocation of resources. Allocation can be according to "need" but there was lack of consensus on definition of "need". There was a conflict of views between a number of interest groups. At times

opposing interests have been along the lines of Commonwealth versus State Government, government versus voluntary organisations, Health versus Welfare versus Education Departments. Most of the conflict arose from a division between "pre-school" and "child-care" forces: we are not seeking to canvas these differences but to concentrate on uncertainties and arguments about pre-school education itself, recognising nevertheless that reconciliation will be needed if ultimate agreement is to be achieved. Much of the argument derives from the inconclusive and sometimes conflicting results of research. An overview of the three main chapters now follows.

1.4 The research literature regularly points to pupil gains from pre-school education. The most marked gains are short-term ones. Some types of pre-school services are known to be superior to others. Children benefit more where child/staff ratios are low, staff are trained and interact regularly with the children, children are given stimulating activities, language development is encouraged and staff turnover is low. Children gain less in dull custodial settings where there is little to occupy them and where they are unable to fully develop their educational potential. While traditional pre-school teaching has not favoured a structured approach it has been found that educationally disadvantaged children can benefit if such an approach is well designed and sensitively used. But not enough is known about specific educational programs (whether structured or unstructured) in order to recommend one rather than another. There is still lack of conclusive evidence of long-term benefits, especially in the cognitive and academic domains. This is not to deny there are long-term benefits, rather that research is so far unable to reveal them extensively. Research does suggest that some minimum standards for pre-school services are in order but more knowledge is needed to determine adequate minimum standards which are reasonably specific eg with regard to child/staff ratios and staff qualifications.

1.5 In overseas countries there has been much extension and expansion of pre-school services in recent years. In countries where services are of high quality (with low child/staff ratios and highly qualified staff) they tend to be very limited in their availability.

Where services are widely available there are often shortcomings in quality. Most countries have neglected evaluation of their pre-school programs. Most countries have more than one governmental agency looking after pre-school children; the usual departments are Education, Welfare and Health. The degree of formal structured pre-school learning is usually related to the child/staff ratio, the higher the ratio the more structured the learning. Most countries, apart from the U.S., have generally been reticent about any difficulties they have encountered in the administration of pre-school services. The U.S. literature has admitted to bureaucratic rivalries, substantial interest groups competing with one another and unwieldy legislation.

1.6 Since the mid-1960s there has been a rapid transformation in Australia from a situation of limited provision of services run by voluntary organisations with low paid teachers and fees paid by parents. Today there is widespread provision of free or low-cost pre-school services for 4-year-old children. There is considerably more government involvement and pre-school teachers are generally paid at levels comparable to other teachers. Faced with limited funds the Commonwealth Government has focused on areas of need, giving special attention here to the development of day care services for the children of working mothers. At the same time the States have been most active in developing facilities for pre-school education. The previous lack of agreement on the allocation of resources to child care and pre-school education shows up in the Australian Government commissioning three reports on education and care for pre-school children in 1973-74 and in the Federal administrative changes from the Australian Pre-Schools Committee to the Interim Committee for the Children's Commission to the Office of Child Care.

1.7 As is to be expected there have been difficulties in writing this document because of the nature of the subject. The amount of research literature is vast (hence the need to often use secondary sources), often lacking clear results and often handicapped by a lack of sufficiently advanced research tools and techniques. Thus there is still relatively little material available for guiding

Commonwealth and State government policies and initiatives. Overseas material is limited in its availability, often not very detailed and much of the statistical data is not comparable. There are difficulties with the Australian scene because of limited information (in particular there is a lack of comparable statistics as among States) and because some policy areas are still the subject of disagreement.

Chapter 2 - RESEARCH REVIEW

I INTRODUCTION

2.1 Research on pre-school education, or more generally early childhood education (see Glossary for definitions), has tended to take place in fits and starts, in scattered and unconnected areas and in different frameworks, from different viewpoints and ideologies. Such frameworks include language, deprivation, environment, curricula, testing etc. It is therefore difficult to write an overview paper which is not somewhat rambling and disjointed. There is no obvious systematic development of ideas and knowledge in the area. There are no early childhood education researchers who have had such a towering influence that their work has been acknowledged and followed-up widely by other researchers. (This is not to deny that there are individuals of towering influence in early childhood education per se e.g. Froebel and Montessori; there are also very influential people in the study of early childhood development e.g. Piaget and Bowlby.) However, a list of important contributors to research on early childhood education would have to include:

Urie Bronfenbrenner, Professor of Psychology and Child Development and Family Studies at Cornell University

Jerome S. Bruner, for many years professor of psychology at Harvard and more recently Watts Professor of Experimental Psychology at Oxford University

Mia Kellmer Pringle, Director of the National Children's Bureau, United Kingdom

Barbara Tizard, Dr Barnardo's Senior Research Fellow, Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London

Burton L. White, Director of the Pre-school Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

All of these names will be mentioned again later.

2.2 Early childhood researchers often find it difficult to produce studies with clear-cut findings. Instead of concentrating on the empirical evidence, this chapter gives special attention to the observations and conclusions of researchers which may be based on views and intuition rather than statistically significant results. Many of the more valid looking conclusions here hardly go beyond the point of common sense. They would probably not yield much if they were to be implemented by practitioners without this quality also. The reader needs to be cautioned that in the following paragraphs which set out in broad general terms many of the major findings about young children, or what their needs are, the lack of follow-up detail is often attributable to the original source rather than omission here.

2.3 The assessment of the research here has been concerned more particularly with its value to the decision making process of government and the commitment of resources. This chapter attempts to be as comprehensive as possible and therefore has to make use of a more-than-desirable amount of secondary sources. There is an enormous amount of literature to cover, much of it not very useful for the purposes of this document. Inevitably in such a survey the reviewer of the literature has to come to a halt knowing that many blind alleys have been pursued and that useful knowledge may have been overlooked. Time restrictions make it difficult to attempt total coverage.

2.4 To keep this chapter within manageable limits, certain areas have had to be covered superficially, or not at all. Some of these areas may deserve considerably more attention e.g. the immediate benefits of pre-school education as opposed to the long term. Immediate benefits may be in the form of additional emotional, social and intellectual stimulation from a day at pre-school that would not otherwise have been experienced. Children can easily find themselves in domestic situations where the parent or care-giver has insufficient time for them, where there is a lack of interesting and challenging things to play with and where their movements are more restricted than they would like. Pre-school education may provide the needed experiences.

2.5 The ideas and topics in this chapter have been arranged and structured mainly in order to respond to the sequence of statements below which appear to represent the thinking of many people concerned with pre-school education.

- Children in their early years are undergoing rapid intellectual growth and are at their most malleable and impressionable; therefore they need to be provided with as much educational opportunity as possible at this stage in order to ensure they begin primary school with a minimum of disadvantage.
- Some children experience educational disadvantage in their early environments and need remedial attention with regard to language and cognitive development; they may also need structured experiences which will later facilitate the mastery of skills such as reading and writing.
- Minimum standards in early childhood education are necessary with regard to teacher qualifications, child/staff ratios and group size.
- Australia has much to learn and implement from the U.S. Head Start Program.
- Parent involvement in early childhood education is important.
- Coordination and integration of early childhood services is needed in order to minimise unnecessary duplication and overlapping.

Each of these statements will be examined in relation to the available evidence. There will be attempts to indicate what aspects are supported by the evidence and what areas are in need of additional knowledge. Some of the statements are further analysed in the Australian section.

2.6 An outline of the chapter's main points is now presented in order to facilitate subsequent reading:

(i) Although there are many areas in need of further research, an abundance of research in early childhood

has already accumulated. A universal problem is achieving research quality.

(ii) More exchange of knowledge and skills is needed between pre-school educators and researchers to assist in the general advance of early childhood research.

(iii) There are gross forms of deprivation which can have long-term adverse effects on child development e.g. lack of stimulation, lack of a secure and stable relationship with a responsive care-giver etc.

(iv) Many pre-school children are not developing to their full extent. There appears to be scope for more parental education on how the home environment can be made less restrictive and more stimulating for young children.

(v) Some disadvantaged children cannot be helped educationally until more basic family needs are met - parents may be too poor, too overworked or too overcome by personal problems to give their children the time they need. Other government areas outside of education may be able to provide assistance here.

(vi) More feedback is needed on programs in pre-school education so that further developments can be based on a knowledge of which program areas are proving effective and why. More attention to language development may be worthwhile - perhaps even the development of an awareness by teachers that standard English is a second language to children from working class families.

(vii) The present body of research is inadequate to substantially endorse any current pre-school education practices in particular, or to formulate major new programs in pre-school education.

State of the Art

2.7 Following the early 1960s there was an intensely active period in which large amounts of data accumulated on early childhood education. The administrator has found himself with the dilemma that:

> "On the one hand he is often under social and political pressure to start pre-schooling because of the 'education advantage' which it is supposed to bestow on children; on the other, the evidence which is emerging from some thousands of evaluations is, at best, inconsistent" (Anderson 1974, p.125).

2.8 One could argue that not only is the research often inconsistent but it is also very much in its infancy. The trouble is partly that child development studies are often not related to child rearing per se. Thus these are assertions that there is little research to guide the structuring of early experience for optimal development (White & Watts 1973, p.7; White 1971, p.131). A recent CERI document (1977, p.9) reports that there are no firm answers on the effects of child care. Burton L White uses the expression "the cupboard is nearly bare" to indicate the lack of knowledge on what is suitable educationally for different young children at different ages (1971, p.132). White points out that an official U.S. manual for parents, Infant Care, has taken a 180 degree turn within a few years (1975a, p.270) i.e. experts have recommended child rearing practices opposite to those recommended earlier (examples would probably include discipline versus tolerance, "demand" versus "scheduled" feeding). White has also expressed caution about use of the professionals:

> "I would even suggest that if you are lucky enough to know a wise woman who has raised three or four or more children, and if you are on good enough terms with that person to be able to get the benefit of her advice, you will more often than not find that she will be better able to help you deal with educational concerns in the first years of your child's life than a professional can" (White 1975a, p.248).

In the same vein Pringle writes:

> "It is the quality of parents' understanding - often intuitive, rarely fully explicit - which can best guide them in the upbringing of a particular child" (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.10).

2.9 The great period of early childhood intervention research peaked in the early 1970s and has been followed by uncertainty about much of what this research found. (Such uncertainty was probably inevitable because of the general situation for social sciences/education research in which conclusive results are often hard to come by.) Occasionally fleeting bursts of optimism re-emerge but as yet there appears to be nothing substantial on which to base this optimism. No doubt a lot of good innovatory work has been carried out in early childhood education which has not shown up prominently in the literature. Therefore, Zigler cannot entirely be dismissed when he points to the need to await the collection and analyses of more data (1976, p.6). Palmer goes even further. He notes that new evaluations of Project Head Start are not likely although the children concerned are just coming of age for school and delinquency data - for him there is a case here for more evidence before reaching a final verdict (Palmer 1977, p.5).

II IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Environment and Development

2.10 The argument for early childhood education is frequently that young children are more likely to establish irreversible behavioural patterns when they are young. For this reason it is necessary to encourage desirable patterns and to safeguard against undesirable ones. Hence the potentially valuable role of pre-school education. The difficulty is knowing just what are the key elements of development in young children. Certain areas of language development would be important at this age e.g. children seem to pick up pronunciation and intonation better at an earlier age than later.

Learning to control and express one's emotions are probably very much developed at this time. Also patterns of interaction with other people - as in forming close and trusting relationships - self-image, self-confidence and a sense of personal worth are at an important stage of development here - possibly also an intellectual style as in whether or not one's curiosity is easily aroused, whether one enjoys problem-solving and is sufficiently persistent and resourceful in dealing with problem-solving tasks. But even if it could be shown that these were the key elements, there would still have to be allowance for many children being less prone to irreversible effects than others. Many children would also respond differently to similar environmental situations.

2.11 Some general views have been expressed on what are favourable and unfavourable settings for young children. Howe reports that many recognised from their career achievements as geniuses experienced enriched early childhoods with numerous books in the home, a family habit of reading, the encouragement of reading, high quality adult language models and appropriate communication with the child (Howe 1975, p.192). Pringle writes:

> "In relation to linguistic disadvantage, probably the single, and in the long run, most crucial factor which promotes intellectual growth is the quality of the child's speech environment, in particular how relevant, distinctive and rich the conversation is. The most essential element is the reciprocity of speech between child and adult, the latter initiating or responding to conversation. Hence the mere presence of adults or just listening to conversation (on TV, for example) is insufficient" (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.25).

2.12 Yarrow et al (1972, 1975) have found that variety, appropriateness and timing of stimulation may be as, if not more, important than sheer quantity of stimulation for some aspects of development - stimulation by people and inanimate objects both appear necessary. With toys and objects, variety has a wide-ranging influence on cognitive and motivational functioning in the early months of

life. Appropriate stimulation for mental development takes into account the baby's individual needs and stage of development (Pilling & Pringle 1978, pp.103-6). Brossard and DeCarie (1971) studied the effects of fifteen minutes of extra stimulation a day (eg talking to and playing with the child, mobile attached to the cot, tape-recorded sounds); over a ten-week period mentally retarded two- to three-months-old institutionalised infants improved to within normal range (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.104).

2.13 According to Clarke-Stewart (1973) mental development can be promoted in the first two years of life by the person with whom the child has an enduring emotional relationship - especially where the relationship allows the two to grow increasingly responsive to each other (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.80). Ainsworth (1973) has pointed out that a secure relationship with the mother facilitates exploratory behaviour (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.152). Clarke-Stewart (1973) writes of evidence that the mother's involvement in the child's play is related to the complexity of the child's play (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.358).

2.14 Some very adverse institutional experiences have been witnessed. Dennis (1960) found marked physical and mental retardation among young children in Tehran orphanages where only the basic physical care was provided (Beck 1974, p.28). Bowlby (1951) has drawn attention to such institutional effects and has unfortunately been misinterpreted at times because of this. Bowlby did not require 24 hours of day care for a child from the same person, nor did he imply "better a bad family than a good institution" (Pringle 1974, p.84). (The controversy over "maternal deprivation" revealed that very little was known about the child's early social relationships (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.163).) The low level of stimulation in the older types of institutions contributed to both mental and social retardation in infants; there were developmental gains where extra stimulation was provided through various "environmental enrichment programmes" (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.103). Tizard and Tizard (1971) have noted that in good-quality institutions, even where there is no close attachment between a child and staff member, intellectual retardation

can be avoided with a high level of staff-child interaction and stimulation. However, there is also evidence to suggest that "children who fail to establish a close relationship in the first three years or so may also experience difficulties in later social relationships" (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.152).

2.15 A Unesco report (1976, p.5) presents eight points on the importance of early childhood:

"1. the first three years of life are of critical importance in the development of language, approaches to problem-solving and social behaviour and emotional growth;

2. basic motivation to learn is inherent in children but it is nourished as a result of the influence of adults within the environment. Thus children learn to learn or learn not to learn as a result of how adults handle their development during the first three years of life;

3. the period after seven months appears to be of critical importance for the development of language, curiosity, social behaviour, and the beginnings of intelligence and emotional growth;

4. language plays an important role in concept development and social behaviour. It begins to develop rapidly about the age of seven or eight months and especially during the two years or so that follow. Most of the basic language acquisitions - grammar, syntax, basic vocabulary, etc. - are already present by the end of the third year;

5. the parents, particularly the mother or the person most in contact with the child, influence the acquisition of language by the way in which explanations are made to the child and the way in which verbal behavior is reinforced, rewarded, punished or ignored;

6. deep curiosity is invariably present in all but seriously damaged children at the age of eight months but unless this curiosity is encouraged and rewarded, it can easily be somewhat retarded by the age of two years, or even sharply reduced;

7. social development is particularly noticeable at the age of eight months, and by the age of two years it is being used to acquire attention, utilise adults as a resource, and seek the support of others;
8. the roots of intelligence as described by Piaget are nourished by the environment and in favourable environments intelligence is well developed by the age of four years (cf. Benjamin Bloom)."

2.16 On the other hand, Kagan has found normal 11-year-old children whose culture apparently exposes them to very deprived conditions in the first 18 months of their lives. These children in a Guatemalan village were very retarded at 18 months after having lived in the dark, without toys and without their mothers talking to or interacting with them (apart from nursing on demand and holding the infants close to them). Kagan reported that the same children at eleven years were cheerful, alert, active, effective and more impressive than Americans in a set of "culture-fair" tests. He therefore disputed the Spitz conclusion that the retardation of South American orphanage children was due to lack of affection. Kagan said that these children "lacked both stimulation and affection, so he (Spitz) made the same mistake many analysts have made and concluded their retardation was due to lack of affection. It's not the affection, because my infants in San Marcos are on their mother's bodies three-quarters of the day, and they get lots of physical holding, lots of skin contact. So it's not the love, but the input, that's important". Finally Kagan concluded that an abnormal experience in the first two years does not necessarily affect the basic intellectual functions or the ability to be affectively normal (Kagan 1973, pp.9-10). Clarke and Clarke also refer to cases of adverse early childhoods being largely overcome e.g. twin boys badly treated from the age of 18 months to 7 years who are now cognitively and emotionally normal (Clarke & Clarke 1978, p.4). Of course, it is not known if all retarding effects have been overcome nor how such children would have developed without these early adverse experiences (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.112).

2.17 Bloom (1964) has estimated that extreme environment can affect IQ by up to 20 points (Beck 1974, p.35). This could mean the difference between life in an institution and a productive life, or the difference between a professional career and an unskilled occupation. Bloom's work has often given rise to the statement that 50 per cent of final IQ is determined by the age of four. De Lemos (1971, pp.29-30) feels that this kind of statement is meaningless; for her Bloom has shown statistically that 50 per cent of the total IQ at age seventeen can be predicted at age four but this says nothing about the amount or quality. The above ideas of Bloom generated much interest in their time; it is probably more apparent now that these ideas are of a rather general nature and do not indicate specifically any necessary follow-up steps.

Reading and Writing

2.18 There is disagreement over the appropriate age for children to learn to read and write. In contrast to prevailing school practices in Australia where children usually begin to read at the age of six years, Doman and Delacato believe the age of six is near the end of the readiness stage for reading; Montessori found that learning to write was easier for the child at 3½ to 4½ years (Beck 1974, p.41). Montessori also found greater receptivity among children to colour, shape, sound and texture at the ages of 2½ to 6 years (Van Der Eyken 1974, p.43).

Is There a Case for Special Provision of Pre-school Education?

2.19 There is mention of the wasted opportunities for development in early childhood. White (1974, p.5) believes that relatively few people get sufficient education in their early years and that at least 9 children out of 10 undergo inadequate early experiences - in particular with regard to the restriction of the child's locomobility from 7 months until at least the middle of the second year (White 1978, pp.193-4). Hunt (1961) probably had the early years of life in mind when he stated that no individual has achieved full intellectual potential (Beck 1974, p.33). The dampener to these arguments is that once at school, the children who did not attend pre-school usually catch up academically with those who did (Van Der Eyken 1974, p.171).

There is doubt that pre-schools can close the gap between the advantaged and the deprived (Van Der Eyken 1974, p.182). It must be pointed out that pre-school programs may be apparently ineffective because of inappropriate measuring (Tizard 1975, p.56). And even two years of effective pre-school may not compensate for ten to eleven years of subsequent unsatisfactory schooling (Tizard 1975, p.93).

Home or Centre?

2.20 If it is assumed that pre-school education is important, there is a need to consider whether it is most desirable in the home or in an early childhood centre i.e. a day care or pre-school centre (it is assumed that most day care centres have an educational component). Bronfenbrenner (1976) has concluded that the evidence does not favour either day care over home care or vice-versa for intellectual growth during the pre-school years (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.11). Pringle writes, "Long-term evaluations of the effects of different types of care arrangements, entered into at different ages, are almost entirely lacking" (Pilling & Pringle 1978, pp.29-30). There is even lack of evidence on whether or not care of the child can be beneficially shared between the mother and other adults (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.141). White argues that full-time day care is inadvisable. However, he allows that part-time day care may be better than none for middle- and upper-income families (White 1975a, p.254). In either situation it is the adult-child relationship which is felt to be of most importance i.e. the quality and intensity of the relationship rather than the identity of the attachment figure (Van Der Eyken 1974, p.73). Research implies that for optimal development the child needs an enduring relationship with at least one person sensitive to his individual needs but this person does not necessarily have to be the mother (Pilling & Pringle 1978 p.112).

2.21 There have been some studies on particular effects of child care centres. Two studies (Blehar, 1974; Van Leeuwen & Tuma, 1972) indicate adverse effects on the quality of attachment to the mother for children aged two to three years in child care centres (a criterion was behaviour on reunion with the mother); these findings contrast with those for younger children. Possible explanations are

that earlier child care is of higher quality and/or that later entry to day care is more disturbing. According to Schwarz et al (1974) day care children are less cooperative with adults and more aggressive (Pilling & Pringle 1978, pp.144-147). But, generally, day care children have been found to be at least as well adjusted as home reared children. In addition, "Substitute care before the age of three does not necessarily hamper intellectual development" (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.149).

2.22 Moore (1969) in a U.K. study of substitute care (individual or day nursery) found unstable substitute care for young children to later produce more signs of emotional disturbance at the age of six such as dependent, clinging and attention-seeking behaviour. However the evidence suggests that stable substitute care is conducive to satisfactory emotional and social adjustment. Group substitute care appears to be associated with the development of a different set of personality traits. U.K. nursery school children are more outgoing, self-confident and spontaneous than children kept at home; they also tend to have fewer negative interactions with peers and more negative interactions with teachers (Pilling & Pringle 1978, pp.157-162). Further comparisons have been made of two groups of children up to the age of 15 years who experienced either substitute care (48 children) or exclusive mothering (57 children) before the age of five. The care began at an average of three years of age and continued for a mean of 25 months. Moore (1975, p.270) concluded that 1) with exclusive mothering the child tends more to internalise adult standards of behaviour, 2) with substitute care boys are more peer oriented and they tend to be more active, aggressive and independent, 3) part-time substitute care "from or after the third year may produce the best personality balance" (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p.178).

Enrichment or Pushing?

2.23 If early childhood education is to be encouraged does this mean that young children may be subjected to excessive adult attention and pressure that may be harmful? Gesell et al (1975, p.50) apparently think so in their discussion of books recommending programs for accelerating children's development and intelligence. They feel

these books have aroused parental anxiety and produced few gains. Joan Beck, author of How to Raise a Brighter Child, has written such a book but takes the trouble to mention that pressure is both bad for children and ineffective (Beck 1974, p.18). Adverse effects from intensive education are likely if necessary experiences are denied for normal emotional and social development. Nevertheless young children can be extended. Durkin (1966) found no psychological abnormalities in early readers who maintained their lead over those who commenced reading at school; the former were not usually bored or confused at school (Howe 1975, p.194). To guard against adverse effects one needs to remember Hunt's notion that for development to occur there must be an appropriate match between the development reached by the child and the new experiences to which he is exposed (de Lemos 1971, p.33). Obviously, the younger the child the more danger for him in experiencing coercion, setbacks and discouragement. To avoid these, programs need to allow for the different interests, abilities and levels of readiness of young children; having something appropriate that is available, rather than something imposed, may be often best for young children when they are looking for something to do that is new and challenging.

Working and Non-working Mothers

2.24 What about the child whose mother is employed? Often the assumption is that he would be better off if his mother stayed at home. But there are also difficulties for mothers of young children who stay at home. In many cases they are without domestic help and the support of the extended family and it is not uncommon for these difficulties to link in with "suburban neurosis" and "baby bashing" (de Lemos 1978, p.5). Pringle writes:

> "The mother who has exclusive care of her child may also become over-protective, and find it difficult to let the child achieve the necessary independence from her ... There is evidence of a high rate of depression among mothers of children under five, particularly those from the working class (G.W. Brown et al, 1975; Richman 1974, 1976) ... Part-time work appears to be quite compatible with the needs of children of this age. The difficulty

> is rather in finding such work, appropriate to the mother's skills, and finding high-quality substitute care for the child. The hours of such employment seldom coincide with those of the part-time nursery school, as presently organised ... Even if the mother does stay at home through lack of good facilities, this is not necessarily to the child's advantage - research with primary-school age children has shown that mothers who are dissatisfied with being full-time housewives make the least adequate mothers (Yarrow et al, 1962)" (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.171).

2.25 Rutter (1972) feels that children of working mothers do not suffer as long as good care is provided (Van Der Eyken 1974, p.114). Where maternal employment is satisfying to the mother, the effects on the child may be positive (Hoffman 1974, p.128). Working mothers experiencing guilt may overcompensate in the handling of their children and this may result in passivity, ineffectiveness with peers and low academic performance. There appears to be a relationship between maternal employment and delinquency among the middle class but not the lower class (this sample included broken homes). There has been found to be no tendency for maternal employment to be associated with delinquency when the family was stable (Hoffman 1974, p.129 & 133).

2.26 Early Bowlby (1951) and Spitz (1945) data on maternal deprivation come from studies of extremely barren, understaffed institutions. Some have seen implications here for early childhood centres but, as Hoffman rightly states, institutionalisation "is not the same as day care, and day care is not the same as maternal employment". Bronfenbrenner (1976) finds that the evidence on the effects of day care is least conclusive with respect to attachment behaviour (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.11). There is no evidence that the caretaker has to be the mother. Burchinal (1963) concluded that adolescents whose mothers were employed in the first three years of their lives did not differ in selected personality characteristics from those whose mothers were not employed (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.148). Maternal

employment during the pre-school years does not subsequently affect the child's emotional or social adjustment (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.163). All the same, Yudkin & Holme (1963) oppose full-time work for mothers of children under three years on the grounds that the mother-child relationship needs to develop (Hoffman 1974, pp.135-6). This echoes a sentiment expressed by White (1975a, p.254) presented earlier in para. 2.20. The solution may be to create more opportunities for part-time work over a wide variety of careers for working mothers. The problem has apparently been overcome in kibbutzim in Israel. Bronfenbrenner (1961) found that while kibbutzim children have working mothers they also spend more time interacting with their parents than children in the conventional family situation (Hoffman 1974, p.136).

III CHILDREN AT RISK

2.27 Pre-school children at risk are usually considered high priority in the allocation of resources to early childhood education according to need. Many believe that effective education intervention for these children will do much to reduce the likelihood of subsequent failure at school. Certain groups of children are more prone to setbacks in school and later life as the result of their experiences in early childhood. These experiences may be with regard to physical handicaps, family structure, adult-child relationships and institutionalisation. One physical handicap often not readily apparent is deafness which can hinder good social, emotional and educational adjustments. At risk groups include children from large families with low incomes, from one-parent families, those separated from parents and those from minority groups (Pringle 1974, p.108). Social class differences in school achievement show up in early childhood. The work of Davie et al (1972) revealed that, "The chances of a seven-year-old being a poor reader were found to be six times as great if he came from an unskilled working-class background in the National Child Development Study of a nationally representative sample of children in England, Scotland and Wales" (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.285). These lower social class children were much more likely to

live in overcrowded homes or those lacking sole use of basic amenities (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.312). Tulkin and Kagan (1972) provide evidence that from ten months of age infants experience more verbal interaction with mothers who are middle class (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.358). Hess et al (1968) found that mothers from low social-status groups were less successful in teaching simple tasks to their children - there were fewer attempts to motivate the child, to praise and to give specific instructions (Pilling and Pringle 1978, p.359). However, working class parents, able to achieve a high level of involvement with their children in intellectually stimulating activities, can do much to overcome the educational disadvantages of social class; they are frequently not helped by overcrowding, poor housing conditions and limitations on time and energy (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.354).

2.28 Reading deficits have been found in children from large families (Pringle 1974, p.66). Illegitimate children have been observed to have deficits in general knowledge, reading, adjustment, etc. (Pringle 1974, pp.126-7). Bronfenbrenner believes that alienation has resulted from decreasing interaction between parents and children (Pringle 1974, p.68). Tizard reports retardation in young children from very large low-income families and low stimulus child-minding establishments (1975, p.58). The damaging effects of prolonged institutional life have been noted (Pringle 1974, p.130). Then there are adult-child relationships. Bowlby has emphasised that the lack of early attachment may result in a psychopath or "affectionless character" (Pringle 1974, p.83). A child needs at least one dependable and lasting relationship with an adult (Pringle 1974, p.135). In support for this, it is known that a high proportion of inmates in prisons, mental hospitals etc. were unloved and rejected in childhood (Pringle 1974, p.81). There are considerable costs arising from the neglect of young children - in terms of human misery, unemployability, mental illness and crime (Pringle 1974, p.154).

2.29 No doubt there are many children with sound pre-school educational opportunities in the home who come from large families, low-income families and minority ethnic groups. There may be also

many children from well-to-do middle-class families who are missing out. A government with only limited amounts of money to spend on pre-school education has to consider this in determining which groups of children will receive priority assistance. Some writers have observed that if priority is to be given only to "hard cases" regardless of social grouping (e.g. the physically abused, educationally neglected, psychologically disturbed etc.) there is the risk of a stigma being attached to these children and their families. Child centres catering for "hard cases" only may create undue strains on staff and be less attractive to qualified personnel. Perhaps some kind of pre-school quota system for children in need may be most practicable - where pre-school centres are mostly attended by "normal" children but a small proportion of places are kept for at risk children.

2.30 Many have argued that early childhood centres have an important role to play in assisting children at risk. They can help in the early detection and remedial treatment of physical handicaps. They can provide opportunities for the emotional, social and intellectual development of children whose families are under-equipped to do so. Yet there are still problems. The Australian centres which are more educationally oriented are the pre-schools which usually operate on a sessional basis e.g. three or four half days a week. This is generally not appropriate for the children of working mothers whose children need full day attention. Moreover pre-schools usually have a middle-class bias in their activities (see para. 4.79) which often fails to be of equal value to lower-class children. Thus young children at risk are more likely to attend centres which are custodial rather than educational. To keep the costs of these centres down in catering for poor families it is necessary to keep down staff wages which means there is little attraction for staff with appropriate qualifications in early childhood education. These kinds of issues are further discussed in later chapters.

IV LANGUAGE

Disadvantage

2.31 Certain groups of children deemed in need of pre-school education are likely to be described as "disadvantaged" or "culturally deprived". Frequently these children are from lower class families or minority ethnic groups. As mentioned before, the typical pre-school may not have much to offer these children. For example, Bernstein (1975) found that the unstructured pre-school is disadvantageous to working-class children (Tizard 1975, p.60) - this is discussed again in para. 4.79. But the main difficulty appears to be concerned with value judgements about language. When there is mention of the middle-class bias of pre-schools this usually refers to the pre-school insistence on using middle-class language. This is probably involved in Tizard's finding that disadvantaged children may have low scores because of the middle-class bias of tests (Tizard 1975, p.57). The query has been raised as to whether or not the demand for language skills is an arbitrary middle-class preference (Fein & Clarke-Stewart 1973, p.73). But it is not agreed that working-class language is inferior to middle-class (Van Der Eyken 1974, p.52). In fact, Pringle (1974, p.32) finds much middle-class speech turgid, redundant, empty and lacking vitality.

2.32 Continuing in the same vein, it has been argued that all languages are inherently equal in complexity and that all dialects of language are systematic, highly structured language codes. Educators have "erroneously equated being verbal with being proficient in standard English" (Cazden et al 1971, pp.386-7). Often when testing, the language experimenters have violated the social conventions of the children tested (e.g. in certain cultures it is inappropriate for a child to display knowledge to an adult). Labov (1970) has even suggested that the language class distinctions arise from lower middle-class teachers being "linguistically insecure" (Cazden et al 1971, p.387). Pilling would probably have some reservations about this. She writes:

> "For the majority of working-class children, any differences in intellectual performance from middle-class

children that are found are probably due to motivational and 'know how' factors. Health disadvantages, and the lesser opportunities for interaction, particularly verbal interaction with adults, cannot, though, be ignored as having an effect on some children, particularly those with most social disadvantages. 'Cultural difference' theorists tend to forget that the 'way of life' of poor, unskilled working-class people is not simply a matter of different culture and traditions but is rather an adaptation to poverty" (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.311).

2.33 Bereiter and Engelmann adopt another viewpoint. (At the same time they warn that a local newspaper article discussing the town's "culturally deprived children" can do a disservice to the school (Bereiter & Engelmann 1966, p.95). Obviously, local parents would not be too happy about having their children publicised as being "culturally deprived".) They state that any child who falls short of school standards "by reason of his particular cultural background may be said to be culturally deprived" (1966, p.24). They point out that there are no schools where lower-class knowledge and skills are valued and fostered. It is further argued that the underprivileged have resisted specific education to perpetuate the working class and to deprive them of the chance to improve their status (1966, p.24). Bereiter and Engelmann (1966, p.25) believe it is the lack of verbal learning which is mainly responsible for the low level of academic achievement of lower-class children; thus there is "justification for treating cultural deprivation as synonymous with language deprivation". The disadvantaged child masters language adequate for social and material needs but not "for obtaining and transmitting information, for monitoring his own behavior, and for carrying on verbal reasoning" (Bereiter & Engelmann 1966, p.42). Joan Tough also believes that working-class children have little practice in using language for certain purposes (Tizard 1975, p.5).

2.34 Engelmann (1967) has indicated areas in which the 4-year-old disadvantaged child needs help i.e. in the use of articles, prepositions, conjunctions, and short verbs; understanding the

function of "not"; producing plurals and using the pronoun "it"; using tenses to describe past, present, and future, and understanding many of the common prepositions and conjunctions; describing their own actions and realising that two or more words can describe one object (Fein & Clarke-Stewart 1973, p.93). This description fits in with Bernstein's (1961, 1971) notion of a "restricted" (rigid and narrow) code of language which he associates with a particular social class and which he contrasts with a "elaborated" (flexible and more meaningful) code (Van Der Eyken 1974, pp.50-1). Some doubts have been raised concerning the Bereiter and Engelmann approach. Pringle is in clear opposition when she writes:

> "It seems clear from the evidence that the main difficulty of lower working-class children does not lie in inadequate knowledge of syntax or even in inability to produce complex sentence structures. The important contribution of the American linguistic deficiencies of at least black lower-class children have been vastly over-exaggerated by writers such as Bereiter and Engelmann (1966). According to the linguists, failure of black, lower-class children to repeat sentences correctly in imitation tasks is due not to linguistic immaturity but to interference of the child's own dialect. This is a coherent linguistic system governed by rules similar to, but not identical with those of Standard English ... The child is, in fact, indicating his understanding of the meaning of the sentence by 'translating' it into his own dialect" (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.311.)

2.35 Bereiter and Engelmann probably have a point in claiming that society as a whole expects middle-class language to be taught to children. It therefore seems worthwhile determining areas in which non-middle-class children need remedial attention. And yet it would appear that the language these children use in their homes deserves more respect than to be described as "culturally deprived". Cazden et al (1971, p.395) might be closer to the mark when they suggest that ideally "both the children's native language or dialect and standard English should be used in the classroom". (Further allowance for the

native language or dialect of children has recently occurred with the legal recognition of "Black English" in Detroit, U.S.A. A Federal judge was reported to have ruled that teachers must stop treating black English as faulty; he argued that this puts up unfair barriers against poor children (Court rules on 'new language' 1979, p.4).)

Language Development

2.36 Insufficient knowledge has been a major obstacle for promoting language development in the pre-school. There is much disagreement among scholars about the basic processes of language development and techniques are inadequate for assessing children's language development (Evans 1975, p.141). As late as 1968 there were probably more researchers on the evolving structure of the child's language than there were children being studied (La Crosse et al 1968, p.51). At a more general level, however, it can be stated that by the age of 3 years most children can understand most of the language they will ever use (White 1974, p.2). This suggests there is ample scope for language work with pre-school children. Furthermore, White (1975b, p.252) has found language to be more prevalent in the experiences of intellectually advanced young children. Pringle (1974, p.90) stresses the importance of how much the child is talked to and how relevant, distinctive and rich the conversation is.

2.37 Some examples of more specific findings follow. Reinforcement effects on infant vocalising have been studied by Rheingold, Gerwitz and Ross (1959) and Weisberg (1963). These studies have demonstrated that contingent smiling, touching, and vocalising increase the vocal outputs of infants (Fein & Clark-Stewart 1973, p.88). Provence and Lipton (1962) and Rheingold (1960, 1961) have found that, "Mothers at home talk more and produce more infant vocalising than caretakers in institutions" (Fein & Clark-Stewart 1973, p.88). Imitation is not the whole answer to language learning; we know that children can construct previously unheard words and sentences from rules learned (Cazden et al 1971, p.379). Children's identification with particular human models plays an important role in their language use (Cazden et al 1971, p.379). In conversations with parents neither parental correction nor reinforcement is a potent

force. The typical language environment of a child offers him "a cafeteria rather than a carefully prescribed diet" and the child takes from this environment what he needs to construct his own language system (Cazden et al 1971, pp.379-380). Hess and his associates (1968, 1969) had 163 Negro mothers tested with their 4-year-old children. They found that pre-school measures of performance correlated positively with the specificity with which the mother gave directions and correlated negatively with the tendency to use imperative statements - both correlations were high (Cazden 1972, p.122). No doubt the above kinds of findings can assist parents and pre-school educators to become more sensitive to the language development needs of children.

2.38 Moskowitz reveals some interesting forms of interaction between child and adult during the child's development with language. When the young child develops from the babbling stage to uttering identifiable words the adults correspondingly change from addressing long complex sentences to the use of very simple sentences. Caretaker speech then features "simplified vocabulary, the systematic phonological simplification of some words, higher pitch, exaggerated intonation, short, simple sentences and a high proportion of questions (among mothers) or imperatives (among fathers)... Over the next few years of the child's language development the speech addressed to her by her caretakers may well be describable by a grammar only six months in advance of her own" (Moskowitz 1975, p.89).

2.39 One of the main reasons for promoting language is because of its relationship to thinking. Hess (1965) believes that language sets limits on future learning and influences thinking (Beck 1974, p.63). According to Pringle, language is a catalyst to thought (Pringle 1974, p.91). Vygotsky (1962) states that the curves of development of thought and speech join, when the child is two years of age, to initiate a new form of behaviour; Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder 1969, p.86) acknowledges that language may increase the powers of thought in range and rapidity but he thinks that basically language use is determined by cognitive development and not the other way around (Cazden 1972, pp.229-231). Many researchers including Piaget

(1961) and Vygotsky (1962) argue against refining thought through language drill while others develop systematic language-thought training such as that provided by Blank and Solomon (Evans 1975, p.183). There seems to be a substantial area of uncertainty here that will need clarifying with the help of considerably more research.

Language in the Early Childhood Centre

2.40 Next there is language research involving the early childhood centre. Tizard et al (1972) found that nurseries with the highest language development were characterised by a smaller percentage of children under 3 years of age, great stability in staff retention and greater staff autonomy; they noted that junior staff talked less to children when senior staff were present (Cazden 1972, p.131). Cazden advises that "teachers must provide a school environment rich in both language the child hears ... and in provocations to self-expression and communication ... in schools - pre-school or beyond - the language environment can be woefully meager without the teacher's deliberate attention" (1972, p.139). Higher language comprehension scores were found in nursery environments with "a higher level of active interaction between the staff and children, in which staff more often read, played with, conversed with and responded affectionately to the children..." (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.107).

2.41 Because many children talk less with adults than with peers, Cazden et al feel that day care centres "should encourage as much talk among children in school as would normally occur outside" (Cazden et al, 1971, pp.388 & 390). They also feel that the quality of adult-child talk is important and prefer the situation where the adult is a resource for the child to draw upon rather than one who fires "know-answer questions of requests for display" (1971, p.391). Hawkins (1967) emphasises the importance of "some third thing which is of interest to the child and to the adult, in which they can join in outward projection" (Cazden et al 1971, p.392).

2.42 In a study of nursery school children, Marshall (1961) found the "most frequent use of language to communicate suggestions,

agreement, and hostility occurred during dramatic play rather than during reality contacts with peers..."; peer language was only a small and limited part of the total language system (Fein & Clarke-Stewart 1973, p.78). Cazden (1965, 1968) studied groups of children in three language-learning situations: 1) where the adult expanded all sentences spoken by the child, 2) the adult spoke an equivalent number of well-formed sentences, 3) no special treatment. "Contrary to predictions, the children who received the non-expanding language stimulation gained the most on measures of language such as sentence imitation, mean length of utterance, and noun-phrase and verb phrase complexity" (Fein & Clarke-Stewart 1973, p.86). Finally Fein and Clark-Stewart sum up on day-care guidelines for language development:

> "Language should be used in diverse settings that illustrate the complex functions of language. Occasions for instructional, explanatory, descriptive, expressive, social regulators and control language that offer opportunities for further language applications and language learning can be deliberately created and conscientiously monitored" (1973, p.97).

Intensive Language Programs

2.43 Special intensive language programs have been devised for young children and have been found to produce marked gains among those deficient in middle-class English. Three programs which will be discussed here are Distar, the Blank and Solomon approach and the Peabody Language Development Kit. The Distar instructional system for language sets out objectives in a hierarchy of successive complexity and inclusiveness. Children are placed in groups of 7 to 8. The system is composed of basic concepts, sentence forms and presentation strategies. The basic strategy is one of pattern drill. Becker and Engelmann found that poor children who begin Distar in the kindergarten progressively exceed average grade-level achievement norms. The program has been generally criticised for emphasising rote memory skills but Ryckman (1972, 1973) has found a generalised training effect on measured intelligence, on selected subtests from the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities and on divergent-semantic production (Evans 1975, pp.142-9).

2.44 The tutorial approach of Blank and Solomon makes use of individual teacher-child lessons for short periods of time (15-20 minutes) during a school day. The emphasis is on language to structure and guide thinking to infer, estimate, deduce and classify. Various concepts are used such as number, speed, direction, temperature and emotions (Evans 1975, pp.152-4).

2.45 The Peabody Language Development Kit (PLDK) is a program for children from 3 to 9½ years. The emphasis is upon mathematical reasoning, social and psychological reasoning, general vocabulary and syntax. Instructional methods include teacher-child dialogue and pattern repetition. A criticism of this program is that it is difficult for the practitioner to alter lesson sequences to meet situational needs (Evans 1975, p.163). Generally, with regard to the above kinds of programs it is felt that we need to know more about how they promote language behaviour in a range of communication contexts (Fein & Clarke-Stewart 1973, p.96).

Bilingual Education

2.46 For some children from minority ethnic groups there is the possibility of pre-schools practising bilingual education which involves the concurrent use of two languages. In the U.S., recipients have been usually Spanish-speaking and American Indian children. Bilingual education has not been widespread in the U.S. and most U.S. programs are based on the assimilation model. There are problems in obtaining suitable teachers, evaluation and developing curriculum. Uncertainty exists on whether or not teaching a second language impedes general cognitive development and native language competence (Evans 1975, pp.171-8).

V COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

2.47 Much of the subject of cognitive development has already been covered in the previous section of this chapter on language. There is some uncertainty as to how much cognitive development can be assisted by pre-school education. White's evidence provides support

for assistance. He found that among children who were developing well there was an accelerated trend of interaction with physical objects (White 1975b, p.252). Hess believes that a mother who uses words to relate her child's behaviour to his surroundings is teaching problem-solving strategies (Beck 1974, p.64). However, Pringle warns of the danger of too much promotion - especially where cognitive abilities are over-emphasised at the expense of motivation (Pringle 1974, p.51).

2.48 Piaget views cognitive force-feeding from external sources as ineffectual although it could be argued that appropriately arranged chunks of experience may assist healthy development (Evans 1975, pp.212-3). This may have happened in replication studies of Piaget's work which lowered his norms for stages of development in thinking (La Crosse et al 1968, p.46).

2.49 The interest of pre-school educators in cognitive development seems to have been rather limited. Clarke and Clarke suggest that present pre-school education has a negligible effect on cognitive development (Tizard 1975, p.48). And nursery school teachers give priority to the social and emotional development of children over intellectual development (Van Der Eyken 1974, p.130). Such teacher attitudes will be discussed later in this chapter.

VI TEACHING STRATEGIES

The Home

2.50 White et al (1978) have looked at child-rearing practices in the home which promote high levels of competence among children in their second and third years of life. The sample for the pilot study comprised 39 children and data were gathered on each child once every three weeks for six months of the year. Certain social experiences were found to be very important for children 12-15 months old with regard to subsequent achievement of competence at three years of age. The social experience need not occupy more than 10-12 per cent of their time but "quite a number of twenty-second interchanges can be

included in the hour or so that represents 10 per cent of a one-year-old child's waking time" (White et al 1978, p.156).

2.51 It was found important for children to be encouraged in their attempts to seek attention and assistance i.e. assistance where the child has tried a task and failed or where having thought about a task the child has concluded that it could not be handled alone (White et al 1978, p.94). Effective attention-seeking is not encouraged by anticipating the child's every need; constant hovering around is not required (White et al 1978, p.113). The child is fortunate if he has someone nearby who is quickly responsive but it is also realistic for an adult to be able to say at times, "I'm busy now. You are going to have to wait a moment" (White et al 1978, p.156).

2.52 Live language directed to the child appears very likely to be beneficial for the development of competence (White et al 1978, p.113). The emphasis here is on "live language on the topic the child is actually thinking about at the moment" (White et al 1979, p.9). Effective childrearing involves attempts by the adult to identify what the child is interested in at the moment (White et al 1979, p.12). A close social relationship is important (White et al 1978, p.151). White et al (1978, p.155) write, "In a design function, the effective child-rearer makes the living area as safe as possible for the naive newly crawling or walking child and then provides maximum access to that living area". They believe that the child should not be chronically restricted. Children retarded in their development were more likely to be restricted regularly in their locomotor efforts, spending as much as three or more hours a day passing time, in a state of boredom and unable to alter their circumstances" (White et al 1978, p.153). With regard to discipline, White et al (1978, pp.156-7) found that "apparently effective child-rearers were extraordinarily firm and consistent with their children while simultaneously showing deep love and respect for the child's interests".

2.53 From the data gathered White et al (1978, pp.157-9) provide a list of general guidelines for effective child-rearing practices. They recommend maximum opportunity for the child to

exercise his curiosity, a wide range of materials to explore, being available to the child for at least half of his waking hours, responding promptly and favourably to the child as often as possible; providing encouragement, enthusiasm and assistance, using words frequently, counteracting boredom, disciplining firmly and consistently and allowing "a child to try to do something that seems somewhat unsafe but would not be unsafe if he were closely supervised." The authors came "to believe that there were four educational foundations that were at risk between 8 and 24 months of age:

1. Language development
2. Curiosity development
3. Social skills and attachment development
4. Development of the roots of intelligence"

(White et al 1978, p.177).

2.54 Using the experience gained from the pilot study White et al (1979) designed a training program which was administered to a group of fifteen families. The experimental group was studied alongside three control groups each comprising fifteen families - 1) the pediatric control group (PC) which was to receive different ideas on childrearing in quantities comparable to the experimental group, 2) a control group (C1) in which the families would receive no training but the children would experience the same intensive test schedule as the experimental group and the PC group, 3) a fourth group (C2) tested only at the beginning and end of the study. The experimental treatment involved group visits at the university and private visits to the home. A period of intensive family support was offered from the time the children were 5 months of age until they were 18 months old. It was found that mothers spent twice as much time with firstborns as compared with later-borns (White et al 1979, p.177). Because later-born children did not appear to gain from participation in the study it was decided to concentrate on subgroup analysis comparing firstborn experimental group children with firstborn control group children. It was concluded that the experimenters had a powerful effect on the families they worked with regularly, whether or not they guided their childrearing efforts, but

only in the case of first-time parents (White et al 1979, p.178). Firstborn children in the study surpassed later-born children by a "huge margin" in the area of intellectual development - using a measure of abstract thinking ability, the object permanence scale of Uzgiris and the Stanford-Binet Test (White et al 1979, pp. 121-123).

Traditional Pre-schools

2.55 Traditional pre-schools are very much influenced by Froebel - children here mainly engage in play activities to develop concentration, imagination, self-expression, manipulative and social skills (Austin 1976, p.277). This movement began in Germany and in its spread to other countries has been adapted and extended. In this process other names have sprung up such as Decroly who promoted planned activities to facilitate observation, association, synthesis and the expression of ideas (Austin 1976, p.260).

Structured Programs

2.56 The traditional pre-school has been found to be of limited usefulness for many groups of children to whom governments would like to give priority in extending pre-school education. Arguments have been advanced in favour of more structured programs for these children. Tizard et al (1976) found that educationally oriented nursery schools (with special language sessions daily) were responsible for significantly higher language scores among working-class children than those of working-class children attending the less educationally oriented centres (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.379). One reservation about structured curricula comes from Bissell (1971) who found that children enrolled in more structured Head Start programs were more likely to give passive responses on the Hertzig-Birch measures of coping style. For Bissell the results suggest that rote learning has been achieved at the expense of encouraging intellectual initiative (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p.198). While structure in the pre-school is a rare thing and would probably be strongly resisted by most pre-school teachers, structured pre-school activities may impress some people as being worthy of further consideration. Already in England, Education Priority Area projects have introduced more structured learning programs. However, Halsey (1972) concluded that

EPA projects did not result in a blueprint of organisation or content for national policy (Van Der Eyken 1974, pp.161 & 166). An important criticism of the EPA program is that the absence of a control group has made some findings difficult to interpret (Tizard 1975, p.xii).

2.57 Three brief examples of structured programs follow. In the Bereiter and Engelmann program there were drill exercises and demonstrations in basic language skills, reading and arithmetic and marked gains were found for a small group of 15 Negro children. Smilansky emphasised task competencies for Oriental children in Israel and this produced marked gains although there was some doubt about the transferability and duration of the skills. With Weikart's Perry Preschool Project, significant IQ gains showed up following structured teaching for specific skills and concepts, using the "verbal bombardment" method (La Crosse et al 1968, pp.3-8). Another structured program is discussed in more detail below.

Montessori

2.58 The name Montessori readily comes to mind in the discussion of structure. Miezitis (1971) recommends the Montessori method for the disadvantaged (Austin 1976, p.136). The Montessori program is specifically designed for the development of cognitive skills, ordering, classifying, seriating, discriminating, etc. (de Lemos 1971, p.20). There is use of a "prepared environment", the didactic materials are equipped with built-in feedback and the child is self-selecting and self-directing (Austin 1976, p.233).

2.59 There has been a revival of Montessorian education in the U.S. because of: 1) interest in disadvantaged children, 2) its relevance to Piagetian theory, and 3) the appeal of discovery learning as advocated by Bruner and others (Evans 1975, p.256). There is much emphasis on motor education such as opening and shutting drawers, pouring water into a basin, cutting with scissors and buttoning. "Occupational" skills are developed such as sweeping, washing, brushing, and caring for plants and animals. There is no allowance for fantasy play (Evans 1975, pp.257-258).

2.60 The aim of sensory education is to promote sensory discrimination skills and concepts of form, size, colour, weight, temperature, and texture. For Montessori orderly thinking was a prerequisite for true creativity. There is a series of steps for writing and reading: 1) the child traces geometric figures on paper, 2) double-outline tracings are filled in by line markers, 3) more varied shapes and sizes are introduced, 4) then sandpaper letters, 5) then the construction of words from a movable alphabet. For arithmetic activities materials are used relating to quantity, identity and difference (Evans 1975, pp.258-64).

2.61 In the Montessorian classroom the teacher is to serve as a resource person. Montessori was against insensitive authoritarian teachers and against teachers creating dependence relationships with their children. The principles of learning and instruction involve heterogeneous grouping by age, active involvement, self-selection and pacing, self-correctional materials and a graduated sequence of tasks (Evans 1975, pp.265-8).

2.62 All this is not as clear-cut as it might appear. While Montessorian education involves a philosophy, concepts and materials, there is still left the teacher's skill and personality, and the orchestration of all these. The benefits of the Montessori method are in terms of learning style, manipulative skills, curiosity-inventiveness, persistence, discrimination, learning sets and attentional responses. But, as Evans (1975, p.275) points out, other more didactic approaches may promote early academic performance more effectively.

2.63 The Montessori method covers much variation from ultra-orthodox to "neo-Montessori". Hunt (1964) has warned against rigidity in the use of Montessori materials. Montessori has been criticised for insufficient attention to social development although one can reply that Montessori emphasised respect for the work of others, self-imposed controls, initiative and the will to subordinate oneself in the interest of others. Other criticisms refer to the relative lack of emphasis on verbal interaction and language

development (Evans 1975, pp.276-83). Finally, Miezitis (1971) mentions the absence of encouraging fantasy (Austin 1976, p.234).

Comparing Programs

2.64 Various programs have been compared but in making such comparisons it needs to be remembered that where a method or model has a label this label may suggest the strategy is unique when in fact the components may not be translated fully into practice (Evans 1975, p.393). Miller compared four pre-school programs involving 248 children. Compared to control groups, significant gains were observed for all four programs. The benefits most apparent were: 1) the Bereiter-Engelmann program - cognitive and academic performance, 2) the DARCEE (Demonstration and Research Center for Early Education) program - motivation and attitude change, 3) the traditional program - curiosity, social and verbal participation, 4) the Montessori program - inventiveness and curiosity. Unfortunately the initial advantages of these children over the control groups no longer existed at the end of second grade (Palmer 1977, p.17). Such a finding is typical of the experiences of the Head Start programs to be discussed later. Another comparison study involves five different programs (the behaviourist program, the contemporary Australian program, the cognitive program, the competency program and the home-based program). This will be outlined in a later section on Australian research.

2.65 The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation in Ypsilanti, Michigan has compared three pre-school education curricula: 1) The Language Training Curriculum - with the teacher drilling in language, reading and arithmetic skills, 2) The Cognitively Oriented Curriculum - the teacher tries to foster the child's mental abilities as "they emerge naturally in the process of growing up", 3) The Unit-Based Curriculum - "a child-centred approach typical of permissive nursery schools... self-expression and the children's interests come before predetermined teaching aims...". The children were from poor families with IQs ranging from 70 to 85. All three programs were effective, none more so than any other. After the first year of pre-school the IQs of children in all the programs increased an average of 23.5 points. Quality in the administration and

operation of the program was regarded as essential (Adams 1978, p.286; Cookson 1978, pp.14-15).

2.66 It has proved difficult to compare the intellectual progress of children attending pre-school centres and those at day care centres. Pre-school studies have generally occurred in highly favourable settings (i.e. well-funded, university connected, low staff/child ratios, specially designed programs). Day care centres with similar advantages have produced intellectual gains of comparable magnitude (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p.167 cites Lally 1973, 1974; Ramey & Campbell 1977; Ramey & Smith 1977).

Reading

2.67 Although children are normally introduced to reading in the primary school some researchers feel that introduction at an earlier age may be more appropriate. Mates (1972, p.285) provides evidence suggesting early readers as young as 2 to 3 years tend to read better later on. Some of the early reading schemes have been devised outside official educational channels and arguments supporting them tend to be based on testimonials rather than research; a profit motive may be partly behind this. An interesting example of an early reading scheme is O.K. Moore's "talking typewriter". The use of this machine by the child is optional and maximum usage is restricted to 30 minutes a day. The machine calls out the letter and the child has to find the correct typewriter key which is not locked. Children progress from letters to words and sentences. The typewriter can be programmed to teach mathematical concepts and foreign languages (Beck 1974, pp.159-68).

2.68 Doman and Delacato discovered that brain-injured children 2 to 4 years old could learn to read; later they also taught normal children to read at these ages (Beck 1974, p.169). Doman (1965) advocates the introduction to reading at the age of 2 to 3 years but de Lemos queries him on whether there is evidence to support this (de Lemos 1978, pp.5-6). De Lemos also questions the Doman stimulus response conditioning situation which she feels compares unfavourably with successful reading programs, such as Montessori's, which are

based on developing various subskills leading to reading readiness (de Lemos 1978, p.8). This amounts to another variation of the argument concerning phonetic reading methods versus sight-word techniques (Beck 1974, pp.169-70). Doman's methods are related to the sight-word techniques while there seems to be an increasing number of authorities who advocate phonetic reading methods. Meanwhile, outside of formal teaching Durkin (1966, 1977) has found that some children at the age of four have learned to read from parents who responded to their questions and helped them on request (de Lemos 1978, pp.7-8). Probably not all children are ready for reading before school age but there may be a strong case for providing many younger children with reading opportunities when they are clearly desirous of them.

Play

2.69 Much of current pre-school education revolves around play. Yet in many cases there is uncertainty about the educational benefits of play. A major research project in England led by Bruner has been under way for some time to remedy this. Montessori has been criticised for a lack of provision for fantasy type play so perhaps the case for play needs to be considered. Bettelheim offers some insights on this topic. He suggests, "Through playing out feelings, children master emotions which would otherwise overwhelm them" (1972, p.308). Through playing out fantasy the child learns the limitations of reality. He also learns that he needs the goodwill of his playmates. In play the child subjects his fantasies to the test of reality. "This forces him to submit his fantasies to conscious control. And so he uses play to become master of himself." Fantasy helps us assimilate reality. "When these two worlds are not integrated, life may come to be experienced as gruelling and unpleasant - as demanding but not also rewarding, as draining of emotional energy but not also generating it" (Bettelheim 1972, p.310).

2.70 Sylva, Bruner & Genova (1976) have examined the role of play in the problem-solving of young children. One of the problem-solving tasks involved sticks and a clamp to be used to reach for a piece of chalk. 180 children were tested; they were aged 3, 4 and 5 years. There were three treatments. In all of them an adult

demonstrated the tightening of one clamp onto the middle of a stick. The groups were: 1) play group - the children were allowed 10 minutes play with the materials, 2) observe principle - an adult also demonstrated joining two sticks by a clamp, 3) no treatment. A second experiment also involved sticks and clamps. The authors concluded:

> "those who play before attempting problem-solving seem to do better for the following reasons. (1) Solving problems required self-initiation and our playing children were the only ones in the experiments whose actions were self initiated. (2) Tool invention (like other forms of problem-solving) requires serial ordering of the constituent acts involved. The players were the only ones who had an opportunity to explore alternative serial orders. (3) Play reduces the stress of anticipating success and failure ... the effect of prior play seems to be not only in combinatorial practice, but also in shifting emphasis in a task from ends to means, from product to process" (Sylva, Bruner & Genova 1976, p.256).

2.71 Further observations on play have been made by Hartley, Frank and Goldenson (1952). They studied for over two years 180 children from 40 different nursery groups. The children came from varied backgrounds and ranged in age from two to six years. 98 observers were employed. With regard to the three- to five-and-a-half-year-old age group, the authors concluded:

> "Within that age range, we distinguish eight functions that dramatic play serves in the usual group situation of the preschool center or kindergarten. Through this activity the child is given an opportunity (1) to imitate adults; (2) to play out real life roles in an intense way; (3) to reflect relationships and experiences; (4) to express pressing needs; (5) to release unacceptable impulses; (6) to reverse roles usually taken; (7) to mirror growth; and (8) to work out problems and experiment with solutions" (Hartley, Frank & Goldenson 1952, pp.27- 28).

Educational Goals

2.72 Unfortunately there is no set of goals for pre-school education which is widely agreed upon. However, most people would agree with Kagan that schools should serve the needs of society and that they need to encourage faith, honesty and humanity (Kagan 1973, p.11). Problems still arise because many goals in early education are difficult to define e.g. spontaneity, curiosity, self-discipline, independence in judgemen and positive social adjustment. "Independence in judgement" for one may be "dogmatism" or "nonconformity" for another. There are possible conflicts e.g. "self-discipline" and "spontaneity"; "independence" and "getting along with others" (Evans 1975, p.368).

VII TEACHERS

2.73 On the subject of teachers there is again some uncertainty as to the kind of people most needed in pre-school education. Kamerman (1975, para.13) reports that there is no international consensus on teacher training with regard to formal school prerequisites and the amount or quality of specific training. Spodek (1972) found, "The research evidence is insufficient to indicate that persons who love and enjoy working with children are necessarily better teachers than those who do not" (Evans 1975, p.387). More positively, Baumrind (1973) sees the need for child workers to serve as models of rational authority for children: "Indecisiveness, passivity, overprotectiveness, and punitiveness are all inconsistent with an attitude of rational authority" (Evans 1975, p.388).

2.74 Bereiter and Engelmann have some radical ideas about teachers. They suggest that nursery-school teachers are generally not desirable for work in the intensive pre-school i.e. where "culturally deprived" children undergo intensive remedial language programs to improve their readiness for school. Bereiter and Engelmann feel that these teachers have much to unlearn, have a "deeply ingrained bias against 'forcing' the child", and often show strong devotion to

non-verbal activities such as games and crafts. They state that the elementary-school teacher is more suited to the intensive pre-school (Bereiter & Engelmann 1966, p.69).

2.75 As recently as 1976 Austin, in a review of eight OECD countries, could write that teacher preparation is not an important variable for pupil achievement in early grades (Austin 1976, p.54). A more recent finding is that if teacher preparation is not important then at least there is a place for care-giver qualifications specialising in child-related fields. Unfortunately it appears that these forms of training are not necessarily the same. There are now available the preliminary findings of the U.S. National Day Care Study - a four-year study, initiated in 1974 by the U.S. Office of Child Development, which has so far involved 1800 children, 1100 parents, 120 classroom groups and 57 centres in Atlanta, Detroit and Seattle (Weiss 1978, p.iii). The study found that care-giver qualifications specialising in child-related fields were associated with higher gains in children's test scores; these care-givers interacted more with children (interaction in the form of questioning, responding, instructing, praising and comforting) (Weiss 1978, pp.14-15). (At the same time no detectable relation was found between care-givers' years of formal education by itself and children's test scores.) The Infant Day Care Study (a small sub-study of the NDCS) found that care-givers with more education and child-related specialisation were associated with less severe stress exhibited by children 18 months and under (Weiss 1978, p.20).

VIII CHILD/STAFF RATIOS AND GROUP SIZE

2.76 A comparative study of OECD countries by Kamerman found no evidence for a particular child/staff ratio in early childhood centres (Kamerman 1975, para.190). Infant-caretaker ratios were found to make a difference in a study of infants in two orphanages in Athens. "Infants in the orphanage with a 3:1 infant-caretaker ratio achieved the various levels of object permanence about a year earlier

than children at the orphanage with a ratio of 10:1, and much less individual attention for the children" (Pilling & Pringle 1978, p.109). The National Day Care Study found there were more benefits from small classroom groupings - 15 or fewer. There were higher gains on the Pre-school Inventory and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test for the small groups than the groups of 25 or more. The results do not permit precise specifications on group sizes and child/staff ratios. The small group benefits were observed when the child/care-giver ratios were constant e.g. there were better outcomes from 12 to 14 children with two care-givers than from 24 to 28 children with four care-givers (Weiss 1978, pp.12-13). Low child/staff ratios by themselves were not associated with high gains on the tests.

2.77 The smaller groups showed high levels of interest and participation. The large groups displayed more wandering, non-involvement, apathy and withdrawal. There was little effect on the children of small variations in the child/staff ratio. The study suggests that large groups may allow children to "tune out" (Weiss 1978, pp.13-14). The Infant Day Care Study found that overt distress was greater in high child/staff ratio classrooms for children 30 months and under; the staff had less time for teaching. Larger group size was associated with more overt distress for children 18 to 30 months of age (Weiss 1978, p.19).

IX HEAD START AND OTHER U.S. PROGRAMS

Head Start Origins

2.78 Project Head Start began in the U.S. with a concern for social services, health, nutrition, education and parental involvement (Austin 1976, p.341). It was especially conceived to deal with the problem of poor early school performers who got further behind over time (White 1973, p.248). McVicker Hunt (1961) and Bloom (1964) very much influenced the thinking behind Head Start. McVicker Hunt argued that intellectual development depended on appropriate experiences at different stages of growth. Bloom found that many human characteristics show very rapid development in the early years and

that increments are partly determined by environment (Steiner 1976, pp.23-25).

2.79 Head Start began in 1965 as a summer program involving 560,000 children, 2,400 communities and 184,000 workers at a cost of about $US195 million. This was followed by increasing emphasis on full-year programs. Mostly half-day care was provided for low-income families and there were some custodial programs and some inventive programs. Not all programs aimed for cognitive stimulation and there was much regional variation. In the first summer many workers had only six days training. In 1966 a majority of Head Start centre directors preferred an unstructured program for children (Little & Smith 1971, p.51). There were some structured experiments e.g. Blank, Bereiter and Engelmann (Little & Smith 1971, pp.62-63). In 1965 only about 20,000 year-long places were available. By 1967 there were 215,000 enrolled in year-long groups (Kamerman 1975, para.158; Little & Smith 1971, p.50). The U.S. child development movement peaked in 1971 (Steiner 1976, p.244).

Head Start Claims

2.80 It is still possible today to come across bold claims made on behalf of Head Start. The following are typical cases and will be critically analysed later:

1) Head Start is a success;
2) Head Start has shown long-term academic benefits where there has been home intervention and parent involvement;
3) Head Start gains which have "washed out" have reappeared later.

Many of the above kinds of statements are made by people desirous of continued government financial support for Head Start programs or research on these programs. While their motives may be totally laudable a certain amount of self-interest has to be allowed for in assessing the validity of their claims.

Success of Head Start?

2.81 Is Head Start a success? Some positive outcomes have been acknowledged. There have been substantial health benefits for children and an increased awareness of educational issues in the disadvantaged community (White 1973, p.249). A more typical finding is that over a ten year period there have been no surprising breakthroughs (Austin 1976, p.342). White (1974, p.7) thinks that Head Start has had little success in preventing educational failure, or in achieving long-term academic benefits (White 1973, p.249). Gains have tended to disappear after a year or two (Austin 1976, p.345). Much of the disappointment seems to have arisen from the American compensatory programs being launched with too high hopes (Pringle 1974, p.94). It was felt that the role of the family was under-emphasised and that parents were not sufficiently helped (White 1973, p.249). Looking back it has been suggested by Bronfenbrenner (1974) and Sally Ryan that the success of pre-school intervention was dependent on parents being involved in their own children's training and on further compensatory efforts after Head Start (Zigler 1976, p.7). As a counter to the educational disappointments, there is the argument that Head Start did not comprise systematic cognitive education (Evans 1975, p.9).

2.82 The first large scale doubts about Head Start were raised by the Westinghouse Study (Cicirelli et al 1969). This study aroused much controversy and was criticised by Smith and Bissell (1970) in the Harvard Educational Review. (Cicirelli et al replied in the same issue disputing the criticisms of the Westinghouse methodology and the re-analysis of the data. While the Study undoubtedly has flaws many of its findings still carry weight today.) The Study was based on a sample of 104 Head Start centres and used children attending first, second and third grade whose experiences varied from one summer to a full year. A comparison was made with "matched controls" (matched on age, grade, socio-economic status etc.) who had not attended Head Start. Data were gathered on language development, reading readiness and academic achievement (Evans 1975, p.66).

2.83 The study tentatively concluded that there were no cognitive gains from the summer programs, there was improved reading readiness from the full year programs and Head Start children were below-average position on national norms for standardised tests of language development and scholastic achievement (Evans 1975, p.67). It was found that the differences between Head Start children at school and the controls were "not much" despite a slight but significant superiority of full year Head Start children in some measures of cognitive development (Steiner 1976, p.32). Substantial gains were found only "in unusually well-designed and executed programs for basic skill learning" and these programs were rare (Evans 1975, p.68). The researchers suggested abandoning "summer only" programs, involving younger children and using more varied teaching strategies and more parental training (Evans 1975, p.68).

2.84 The Office of Economic Opportunity found that the school achievement of Head Start children tended to level off and others caught up (Steiner 1976, p.34). At this point it can still be argued that evaluations such as these may have covered many poorly conducted programs and that there may have been insufficient attention to the better ones. Bronfenbrenner (1974) had this in mind when he carefully chose 12 well-run studies of pre-school intervention in group settings. The studies were of children in programs from the age of one to six years. After the programs finished substantial initial IQ gains were found. But again, unfortunately, the gains "washed out" after school entry (Bronfenbrenner 1974, pp.52-53). Bronfenbrenner (1979, p.169) has more recently softened this conclusion by stating that "more ecologically valid methods for assessing development-in-context have not yet been applied" and that the "wash-out" conclusion could have been premature.

2.85 There have been difficulties in evaluating pre-school intervention. There has been variation in the quality and kind of programs (CERI 1975, p.49); variation in the programs with regard to accommodation, staffing and time (Little & Smith 1971, p.51). The variation from area to area makes it difficult to generalise from the study of one area (Little & Smith 1971, p.52). The expectation of

quick results did not help Head Start and prior knowledge of child development was patchy and uneven (CERI 1975, p.49). It was unreasonable to assume that Head Start could be the answer to major cultural and economic problems (CERI 1975, p.49). The feeling is that if successful programs are to be ensured in the future, it will be necessary to establish aims and objectives; there will be also a need for constant evaluations and revisions (Austin 1976, p.343). Such aims and objectives will need to be based on more reliable knowledge about child development.

2.86 Zigler (1976), director of the U.S. Office of Child Development and Chief of the Children's Bureau from 1970 to 1972, has attempted to counter the criticisms against Head Start. He points to the Sarason claim that the 1960s programs accomplished community gains i.e. the "development of a cadre of socially involved leaders among minority groups and among the economically disadvantaged..." (Zigler 1976, p.4). He refers disapprovingly to the current conventional wisdom that no striking long-term effects have accrued from one-year Head Start experience. For him the "fade out" argument supports those who feel money for disadvantaged children is a waste. His reaction is to stress the need to await the collection and analyses of more data (Zigler 1976, p.6).

2.87 Project Head Start led to the Follow Through project which was designed to help Head Start children at school maintain the gains which they had achieved at the pre-school stage. A five-year analysis of the national Follow Through data produced some rather disappointing results. Anderson et al (1978) report:

- "Each Follow Through Model had very different effects on test scores in the various communities in which it was implemented. Differences in effectiveness between sites within each model were greater than overall differences in effectiveness between models" (p.162).
- "In most cases, the Follow Through groups scored about as one would expect similarly disadvantaged groups to score without Follow Through. Where differences were apparent, Follow Through groups scored lower more frequently than

they scored higher (Stebbins et al, p.158). It appears clear, then, that the Follow Through strategy is not an effective tool for raising poor children's test scores" (p.162).

"With few exceptions, Follow Through groups were still scoring substantially below grade level at the end of three or four years' intervention (Bock, Stebbins & Proper, 1977 passim)" (p.163).

Home Intervention and Parent Involvement

2.88 The second major claim for Head Start is that it has shown long-term academic benefits where there has been home intervention and parent involvement. The available evidence is not quite as unequivocal as this. With two studies of home-based tutoring programs, initial IQ gains were again found to "wash out" after school entry (Bronfenbrenner 1974, p.53). Another approach to home visits involved parent-child intervention where the parent and child were encouraged by example with appropriate materials. Bronfenbrenner (1974, pp.53-54) looked at nine studies here and found substantial IQ gains three to four years after the programs ended. The greatest gains were for the earliest beginners and younger siblings also benefited. It was found important for verbal interaction to centre on cognitively challenging tasks. There was, however, little success with severely overburdened families. And none of the studies went beyond the first grade - hardly the stage to be assessing long-term academic achievement.

2.89 The above home visit programs appear to be part of the U.S. Project Home Start which was meant to provide services to children aged 3 to 6 years in the home comparable to services received in a Head Start Centre. Home Start costs are comparable to Head Start Centre based programs but it is not clear if the benefits equal those of Head Start. As with Head Start cognitive gains of children in home-based programs have been found to fade (Steiner 1976, pp.75-83). Tizard (1975, p.21) has noted that the improvements in test scores from U.S. Home schemes have not been sustained after visiting stops. Some feel that remediation is only successful on an intensive

one-to-one basis. There are also misgivings about home visits because those most in-need are the least likely to accept and visitors may arouse feelings of inadequacy (Tizard 1975, pp.49 & 52). On the benefit side, Zigler believes that parent involvement can encourage in parents a sense of control over the world which children pick up (this is a variable very much related to school performance). Hence the argument that there are positive benefits for children from a commitment to parent involvement (Zigler 1976, p.5).

Re-emerging Gains?

2.90 The third claim concerns the disappearing gains from Head Start which supposedly re-emerge later. This is probably the most doubtful of the beneficial claims so far discussed. An example comes from an article "Researchers Know Preschool Works - Now They Ask Why?" in the newsletter Report on Preschool Education (Volume 10, number 5, February 28, 1978, p.7) from Washington, D.C. This reports on a project coordinated by Dr Irving Lazar of Cornell University. The newsletter states, "Achievement and IQ gains which were found immediately after preschool and then seemed to wash out, re-appeared later in the children's academic careers, researchers found" (p.7). In fact the Lazar report states that the data refute the hypotheses that: 1) early education has only a short-lived effect on IQ scores, and 2) early education has a permanent effect on IQ scores (Lazar et al 1977a, p.61). Hardly the same thing as the newsletter statement.

2.91 The newsletter's conclusion may have been based on a bar diagram on page 21 of the summary report of Lazar et al (1977b). The diagram compares post pre-schoolers to control groups who had not attended pre-school. It shows four bars representing IQ score differences found at four different times after the pre-school program. The order of the IQ score differences from greatest to least is 1) immediate post-test, 2) test two years after program, 3) test one year after program, 4) test three to four years after program. The trend would be more obvious if the order of the middle two tests was reversed. The difference between these two was only one-half to one IQ point and is most unlikely to be significant.

2.92 The Lazar study is a long-term follow-up of 14 infant and pre-school experiments for children who at the time were aged from 3 months to 5 years, who were predominantly black and of whom 40 per cent were without a father in the home. There were three kinds of experiences: 1) centre-based, 2) home-based (with a home visitor providing activities, toys and games), 3) a combination of 1) and 2). Various problems in this long-term study were acknowledged. There were the problems of secondary analysis i.e. 1) the data is used in a way not originally intended, 2) there is only a slim chance that "most projects would have independently collected the same measure at the same time" (Lazar et al 1977b, p.7), 3) the different experimental designs make comparisons tenuous. Attrition was a problem i.e. the loss of subjects over time. There was considerable variation in the assignment of children to program and control groups (Lazar et al 1977b, pp.5-11). In addition to this, Bronfenbrenner (1979, p.168) points out that Lazar and his colleagues included several projects which Bronfenbrenner eliminated in his own study because of flaws in research design which meant that experimental and control groups were not sufficiently comparable.

2.93 Lazar et al found that in comparison to control groups, the program children were less often assigned to special education classes, were held back in school less often and had higher Stanford Binet IQs for three years after the program. The effects of early education on Wechsler IQ were probably not permanent. For children aged 13 years and above there were no treatment/control differences on IQ (Lazar et al 1979b, p.12). There is uncertainty about the meaning of less special education and less grade retention for program children. It may be due to increased parental competence to deal with the school system. Lazar et al (1977b, p.28) conclude "At this point, then, the evidence does not differentiate between the relative contribution to the effects on school performance of increased intellectual skills in the child and increased parental concern with the child's learning". Here Lazar et al are referring to an increased parental concern and competence to deal with the school system - an indirect effect of parental sensitization by the preschool experience of their children. (The Times Educational Supplement has reported on

the Lazar et al study and does not question the alleged Head Start success with grade retention and placement in special education classes (Cookson 1978, p.14)).

2.94 The reports by Lazar et al mention infant and pre-school services being responsible for "either a reduced probability of being assigned to special education classes or a reduced probability of being held back in grade. Either reduction constitutes a substantial cost reduction for the school system" (Lazar et al 1977a, p.107). The summary of this report states, "These findings indicate that the failure to require a deliberate well planned curriculum for young children in federally supported day care programs is likely to cost more money in later special education expenditures than would be saved in day care costs" (Lazar et al 1977b, p.29). The question here is whether or not a cause and effect relationship has definitely been established. It has already been mentioned in para.2.93 that pre-school probably had no permanent IQ effects and that less special education and less grade retention for program children cannot be specifically attributed to pre-school effects on school performance. Lazar et al (1979b, p.6) have since further analysed the data relating to grade retention and assignment to special classes in order to ascertain if the results were affected by, 1) differences in treatment and control group children before the program began, 2) less assignment to special education classes because IQs were temporarily raised by pre-school programs, 3) pre-schools only helping brighter children or those from more advantaged backgrounds. It was concluded that none of these factors affected the results (Lazar et al 1979b, pp.8-9). The results were still highly significant independent of the effects of the child's sex, ethnicity, cognitive ability (as measured by initial IQ score), family size (number of siblings), family structure (father absent or present), and the level of education attained by the child's mother (Lazar et al 1979a, pp.61-62).

2.95 Bronfenbrenner (1979, p.190) believes that the Lazar et al findings on grade retention and assignment to special education should be regarded as tentative because the programs examined were not uniformly successful. He writes:

> "Whereas four out of five projects had shown reliable effects ($p \leq .10$) in terms of assignment to special programs, only one out of seven did so for percentage of grade failures, with one sample even showing a non-significant reversal in favor of the control group."

2.96 In their more recent report, Lazar et al (1979b, pp.11-14) also found evidence for early education significantly increasing children's scores on fourth grade mathematics achievement tests; there was a suggestive trend toward increased scores for verbal achievement. With regard to vocational aspirations, it appears that pre-school elevated mother's aspirations over their children's aspirations. Treatment mothers also tended to have higher vocational aspirations for their children than did control mothers. Looking at what kinds of programs were the most effective, it was concluded that "there appeared to be no systematic benefits derived by certain kinds of children from certain kinds of programs, at least insofar as we could measure".

2.97 A New Scientist article by Lewin (1977, p.508) is entitled "'Head-start' pays off" and subtitled "A 12-year-old U.S. programme to get socially deprived children off the ground educationally has now, after various setbacks, strikingly proved its worth". Much of this is based on a paper by Francis H. Palmer (of the State University of New York) called "The Effects of Early Childhood Intervention". The journal Science News also mentioned this paper by Palmer (Vindication of early childhood programs 1977, p.151). The paper was presented at the 1977 Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Denver, Colorado. While the New Scientist article repeats some of the bolder claims of Palmer, it does not go into the more blurred findings of which there are quite a few. The findings come from studies with high rates of attrition where 1) control groups are very sketchily described (if at all), and 2) many expected gains for experimental groups do not show up at all.

2.98 There is mention of the "sleeper effect" "which means simply that benefits which were not apparent at the time may be detectable several years after the intervention ceases" (Lewin 1977, p.508). This may come from Palmer (1977, p.18) who refers to the "sleeper effects" which were found by Drs Abelson and Sykes of Yale University. Apparently, the experimental group had experienced both Head Start and Follow Through programs while only some of the controls had experienced Head Start. It is not known if the experimental children were more likely to have parents able to get their children into intervention programs as a result of being ambitious for their children's education. Other possible extraneous factors have not been ruled out. Palmer (1977, p.18) states, "The intervention group did not show superiority over their controls at the end of the third grade. At the end of the fifth grade, however, the children with Headstart experience were again superior to their controls on three of five measures of academic achievement: reading recognition, spelling and general information".

Possible Gains?

2.99 Palmer also reports on his own study of compensatory education which began in 1963 and initially involved 310 children - 120 who began the program at 24 months, another 120 who began at 36 months and 70 controls. There were two groups for intervention: 1) a concept training group and 2) a discovery group (with the same instructors and materials as 1) but no training). The concepts were taught in one-to-one teacher-child interaction twice weekly in one-hour sessions for eight months. After eight months the children were given Stanford Binet IQ tests and the experimental groups averaged 100 compared to 92 for the controls. The Concept Training group showed from testing that they knew more concepts than the Discovery Group. Those trained at age of 3 were superior to the controls on most measures at the conclusion of training. Those trained at 2 continued their superiority over controls a year after training ceased. There were no significant IQ differences between the Concept Training and Discovery groups.

2.100 The above children were again studied in 1975 when they had reached the fifth grade. Some attrition had occurred - data were available on 233 of the original 310 children. The WISC IQ scores for the four experimental groups were found to be significantly higher than for the controls (99.2 compared to 93.2), the reading level for the four groups was higher by one to four months (only one of these differences was statistically significant), 22 per cent of the experimental groups were one or more years behind in grade compared to 45 per cent of the controls (Palmer 1977, p.10).

2.101 Professor Martin Deutsch studied 275 children involved in an early childhood program beginning from 1958 (Palmer 1977, p.12). Data was available on 82 of these children at the end of the third grade; there was a similar attrition rate for control groups. On the Stanford Binet IQ the experimental groups averaged 100 after the Prekindergarten training program was completed; this dropped to 97 by third grade compared to 91 for the control groups. In the third grade the experimental groups were slightly ahead of the controls in reading (Palmer 1977, p.12).

2.102 Palmer also refers to the Ypsilanti (Michigan) Perry Preschool Project headed by Dr David Weikart. From 1962 to 1967 there were 123 black disadvantaged children aged 3 and 4 years in the cognitively oriented program (Schweinhart & Weikart 1980, p.63). The experimental groups experienced a two-year program, 2½ hours a day for five days a week. The teachers visited each mother and child at home for 90 minutes a week "not to impart wisdom but to focus on the mother's interest in her child's development" (Adams 1978, p.284). There was annual testing for an equal number of controls. Immediately after the program there was observed to be a 12-point difference on the Stanford Binet IQ between the program children and the controls with equivalence in initial cognitive ability, sex ratio and socio-economic status. Between ages 3 and 15, children were assessed by a total of 48 measures. After the first grade no differences were found on the Binet but the program children outperformed the controls on the California Achievement Test (CAT) measures of reading and arithmetic achievement (Palmer 1977, p.18). Among the many U.S. intervention

programs we have an unusual result here - in reading, vocabulary and arithmetic the experimental children were more than one full grade higher by grade eight (Adams 1978, p.285; Cookson 1978, p.14). Weikart et al (1978, p.88) conclude:

> "In eighth grade, the experimental group outperformed the control group on the CAT total score and on all but one subtest. The magnitude of the treatment effect was at least twice that found at fourth grade. Although achievement levels in the experimental group remain, in general, far below that of the national norm (as does achievment for the community as a whole), achievement gains by eighth grade would seem to be educationally as well as statistically significant."

Weikart, whose study was used by Lazar et al (see para. 2.93) also found that a smaller proportion of the experimental children were held back in grade. An economic analysis of Weikart's Perry Pre-school Project suggests cost savings from pre-school education because of a reduced need for later special education and the higher projected earnings of pre-school participants (Adams 1978, p.287; Cookson 1978, p.14). The experimental group has been rated more favourably for classroom conduct and personal behaviour during elementary school and has experienced lower frequencies of reported delinquent behaviour. More teenagers who had attended pre-school had a current job than did members of the control group (Schweinhart & Weikart 1980, p.64).

2.103 An important point raised by Palmer (1977, p.22) is that no new large-scale early childhood studies have been funded in the 1970s. This could mean that teaching and evaluation techniques which were refined and improved in the late 1960s are not being tried out or having their qualities revealed to others in need of them. On the studies cited in his own paper, Palmer rightly points to the possibility of attrition causing bias and assessors being biased by intervention. Results may have been more definite too if there could have been more allowance for the possibility, as Palmer indicates, that some children may respond best to one treatment and others to another (Palmer 1977, p.23).

PARENT EDUCATION

2.104 A case can easily be made out for parents to play a greater role in educating their children during the years before school - that is so far as their own capabilities allow them. Most of what is learned by the young child is learned at home (Tizard 1975, p.17). White (1975, p.256) believes that mothers and fathers are better at child-rearing than day care centres. Pre-school enrichment programs have been found most effective where there has been active maternal involvement (Pringle 1974, p.160).

2.105 Of course, some parents are more effective than others. For White and Watts, effective child-rearing involves talking a great deal to children (at their level), being interested, providing access to many objects and diverse experiences, giving encouragement, demonstrating and explaining at the child's instigation, being firm and consistent. Effective parents teach in small but frequent amounts (White & Watts 1973, pp.242-4). Also to be taken into account are the qualities needed for good child-rearing such as love, patience, stamina and knowledge (White 1975a, p.260).

2.106 Parent teaching has been suggested through high school courses on child rearing, public television, adult education courses for pregnant women and their husbands. This could be accompanied by resource centres for lending toys and books with professionals available for advice (White 1974, pp.13-14; White 1975a, p.260). Parent teaching has been advocated through the use of home visitors and through watching and helping teachers. Health and welfare support may also be used to improve parent-child interaction (Tizard 1975, p.81). Suggestions for course content include informing people of the arduous demands of child-rearing and helping couples to understand how their relationships will change when they become parents (Pringle 1974, pp.156 & 160).

2.107 Parent education in the U.S. dates back to the Child Study Movement in the 1880s. Programs were also conducted in the

1950s and 1960s by the National Institute of Mental Health. Unfortunately these programs failed because the professionals concerned (e.g. clinical psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers) did not make sufficient allowance for the language differences of people with disadvantaged backgrounds. More recent programs devised by Gray and Klaus (1965, 1970) have been more successful - parents were able to observe teachers in compensatory classes and demonstrators made home visits in order to help mothers apply what they had learned in the classrooms (Hunt 1977, p.12).

XI COORDINATION OF SERVICES

2.108 Services for young children are frequently administered by a variety of organisations which may at times overlap and duplicate the work of each other. In the interests of rationality, efficiency and reduced costs it is often argued that much can be gained from the coordination of such services. But many attempts at coordination have failed. Janet Weiss (1977) has discussed the obstacles to success in her selective review of the coordination of social services for children - mainly in the U.S. A major finding is that coordination programs almost never achieve cost reductions, even in the long-run; in most cases costs have increased (Weiss 1977, p.4). Failure has been attributed by many not to coordination itself but to uncooperativeness among administrators, professionals, legislators, public officials and planners acting out of self-interest (Weiss 1977, p.2). What has generally been overlooked is the lack of clarity in the aims for coordination - a term which has been used with all-purpose connotations to cover a multitude of goals which are not necessarily compatible e.g. comprehensiveness, accountability to clients, accountability to government, accessibility, administrative efficency, improved participation and communication (Weiss 1977, p.18).

2.109 Coordination plans need to take into account the interests of all concerned. For example, coordination may suit the client and service organisation but it could meet resistance from the professionals if there are threats to their professional norms about

specialisation, autonomy and expertise (Weiss 1977, p.10). Both internal and external relationships among organisations are not likely to change successfully unless the new procedures are seen as more rewarding than the old. Threats to an organisation's survival or autonomy are also likely to meet with resistance (Weiss 1977, pp.12-13). Weiss points out that the elimination of overlap and duplication by coordination may mean the elimination of diversity and of opportunities to experiment (pp.15-16). Finally, in summing up she writes:

> "The experience recorded in the literature suggests that coordination is difficult and expensive to implement and, even when implemented, often has little impact on the quality of service delivery. These wholesale failures cannot be attributed to malicious sabotage by aggrieved bureaucrats. Rather wholesale problems interfere with coordination attempts and these problems arise from some fundamental processes of the conceptual, professional, organizational, and political settings of social service delivery systems" (Weiss 1977, p.17).

XII AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH

2.110 Ashby (1978, p.25) has written, "Pre-school education has not been a major interest of researchers in Australia ... substantial contributions to the literature have yet to be made". Ashby (1978, p.26) sees an intellectual and philosophical narrowness to be widespread in Australian pre-school education. Curriculum "was an area regarded with great suspicion because it implied the possibility of 'directing', 'shaping' or 'instructing' the child. ... Acceptance of an ideology was substituted for empirical investigation and rigorous analysis of concepts" (Ashby 1978, p.26).

2.111 The following studies give some idea of recent work being undertaken. While a larger number could have been covered, the additions would have been mainly very small scale. The more ambitious Australian studies are mentioned later in the section on Aboriginal

research. These have been supported by considerable time, money and academic effort. Much of the work has been along the lines of Project Head Start and the disappointments have been equal to, if not greater than, the American experiences with disadvantaged pre-school children.

2.112 Neale's study (1973, 1976) of handicapped children in the regular pre-school found that minimal supportive tutoring was essential for socialisation and competence. Otherwise the result was rejection of the child and reversion of development (Ashby 1978, p.40). Another study (Ashby 1969) has looked at just how much staff interact with pre-school children. Much of the teacher's activities in a study undertaken at Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers' College was observed to be related to servicing and supervision. Teachers were found to spend from 62 per cent to 80 per cent of their time in non-interactive activity (Ashby 1978, p.46). Since there are studies which show that various forms of staff-child interaction help promote child development, it seems that more efficient use of staff could be made in the average pre-school.

2.113 The Queensland Department of Education has been carrying out studies of pre-school education provision for geographically isolated children in Queensland. The aim of the program is to supplement and extend the child's regular home experience. The program "consists of eight kits (or segments) of materials which include guides for parents, activity suggestions, stories, poems, music and movement experience. Both printed materials and cassette tape materials are included. These are mailed at regular intervals to parents, who in return send back completed evaluation sheets, taped comments about the child's performance, problems that have been encountered and samples of the child's work" (Ashby 1978, p.4). Parents generally approved of the materials and most believed the materials to be helpful to their children. Various difficulties, especially time, prevented the parents from taking full advantage of all that was provided. The parents felt that the teachers responded very slowly to their queries (Ashby 1978, p.48).

2.114 Attempts have been made to measure different kinds of pre-school *experience*. *Clough* (1971) has compared a program emphasising cognitive development and language skills with the traditional free-play ustralian program. A sample of 72 children, with lower socio-economic backgrounds and below average ability, was drawn from six metropolitan pre-schools. In the experimental program there were short, structured daily lessons over a period of 20 weeks. The experimental group made only small but non-significant gains compared to the traditional group (Ashby 1978, p.43).

2.115 A study by Bragget compared above average intelligence pre-school children with matched control groups who did not attend pre-school. The experimental groups consistently outperformed the controls over a three year period, the differences being statistically significant (Bragget 1976). This finding contrasts with many Head Start studies which deal with children with below average intelligence. While Bragget took considerable care to obtain matched groups (with regard to sex, age, family size, birth order, measured intelligence and neighbourbood area) it appears that, unlike the experimental group, the controls were not considered for enrolment by their parents.

2.116 The Mt Druitt early childhood project for disadvantaged children in Sydney was funded by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation for a total of $340,000 for three years commencing in April 1975. The project aimed to develop each child's social competence to the fullest extent. Five different programs were commenced:

1. The behaviourist program - the main aim was to develop pre-reading, pre-writing and pre-number skills; consistent use was to be made of social praise as a reinforcer to shape behaviour.
2. The contemporary Australian program - emphasised social and affective growth.
3. The cognitive program - emphasised acquisition of intellectual abilities as a result of the child's interaction with his immediate world.

4. The competency program - sought to develop positive self-concept; regulation of anti-social behaviour; and language communication and creative thinking skills.
5. The home-based program - operated with the mothers at home, helping them to give worthwhile education experiences to their children (Braithwaite 1977, pp.19-20).

2.117 The formative period for the Mt Druitt Project took place in the third term of 1975 and in most of 1976. The 1977 cohort was regarded as the major group for study. In January 1977 (Mt Druitt Project 1977, p.207), satisfaction was expressed with regard to the establishment and consolidation of all five programs. A year later the third annual report states, "We believe that all the programs are successful and provide children in the Mt Druitt area with worthwhile educational experiences which will enable them to develop their individual abilities and develop a positive attitude to schooling ..." (Mt Druitt Project 1978, p.3). But it has not all been smooth sailing. It has been acknowledged that not all Project objectives were achieved because of the complexities of the original goals (Mt Druitt Project 1977, p.207). The interventionist approach to the Project was abandoned (Mt Druitt Project 1978, p.2). The selection of a control group failed because it was realised too late that the group comprised volunteer parents and was not truly representative of the area (Mt Druitt Project 1978, p.32).

2.118 Comments by the Mt Druitt Project team suggest that perhaps the five programs were not all that different from one another. There were difficulties using social praise as a reinforcer in the behaviourist program. The use of praise had to be deliberately varied and reduced because an over-saturation of praise had caused its reinforcing value to diminish (Mt Druitt Project 1978, p.16). With the contemporary Australian program there was no prescribed content for the curriculum and this responsibility fell to the teaching staff (Mt Druitt Project 1977, p.19). Small language groups were introduced into the Australian program in 1977 (Mt Druitt Project 1978, p.12). Provisions were introduced in the cognitive program for teachers to alter plans and routines to preserve children's interests and

involvement; selection of materials and procedures was initially quite confused. There were difficulties in realising Piaget's findings in curriculum terms (Mt Druitt Project 1977, p.95, p.109 & p.182). Work at practising cognitive skills was discarded. It was also found that generally parents ranked social-emotional development above cognitive development (Mt Druitt Project 1978, p.21). With the competency program it was stated that no particular teaching style was specified for the program which was likened in some ways to the traditional pre-school programs; a major problem was that 20 children initially attended for only a short time and did not return (Mt Druitt Project 1977, pp.38-40). There were uncertainties with the home base program - teachers were not always able to accept parental goals and substitution of a "hidden curriculum" was likely to create problems of trust (Mt Druitt Project 1977, p.128). Despite the departure from the initially designed programs the findings to date and the further studies planned appear capable of making a useful contribution to understanding aspects of early childhood development.

Lady Gowrie Child Centres

2.119 In 1939 the Commonwealth Government granted money for the founding of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres. Initially the Centres were financially administered by the Commonwealth Department of Health. The Centres were set up in each capital for the "testing and demonstrating of methods for the care and instruction of the young child" and "the study of problems of physical growth, nutrition and development" (Cumpston & Heinig 1944, p.3). The Centres were each designed and equipped to accommodate 100 children between the ages of two and six years. Research on physical growth and nutrition figured much more prominently in the early years of the LGCCs than it has in recent years. Responsibility for funding of the LGCCs was transferred to the then Department of Education and Science in 1969, to the Interim Committee for the Children's Commission in 1974 and then to the Department of Social Security, Office of Child Care in June, 1976. The Early Childhood Development Officer (previously known as the Education Director) of the Australian Early Childhood Association (formerly the Australian Pre-School Association) consults with each LGCC Committee with regard to staffing, policy and research.

2.120 Because of their additional tasks the LGCCs were provided with considerably more resources than the average pre-school centre. Unlike the average centres they have had observation booths, seminar rooms, non-teaching directors and (in the past) two qualified staff per group of children instead of one qualified teacher and an assistant (Scott 1972, p.9). Initially hours of pupil attendance were from about 9.00 am to 2.30 pm but this was subsequently reduced to allow staff more time for preparation, record-keeping, program-planning, community activity (Stamp 1975, pp.12-14) and tutoring of tertiary students. There have been variations in total enrolment numbers. The result of all this is considerably more expenditure per pre-school child than elsewhere - at $600 per child in 1973/74 it was three times the cost of other centres (Social Welfare Commission 1974, p.112). Since the early 1970s the staff situation has changed so that now the trend is for LGCCs to have one qualified teacher and an assistant (untrained as a pre-school teacher) per group of children. Since 1975 pre-school hours have been extended to the afternoon again to allow the attendance of additional groups of children. The Perth LGCC now offers full day care 7.30 am - 5.30 pm for 0 to 6-year-olds (the Centre is licensed to cater for six babies and 20 children), Monday to Friday, 48 weeks per year; the Centre also provides day care over shorter hours, after school care and holiday care for 5 to 12-year-olds and operates as a neighbourhood centre. Activities at the Sydney LGCC include occasional care two afternoons per week 1-5 pm for 15 children.

2.121 Because of the cost of these centres, several reviews were undertaken to establish their value to the children they served, to the community and to pre-school education in general. These include reviews by the Australian Pre-school Association which has drawn attention to various accomplishments e.g. a total of 8,851 visits recorded in 1974, 332 out of 547 total enrolments in 1974 having "some special need to attend - such as language difficulty, conditions of stress within the home, etc. - 50 being referred to the Lady Gowrie Child Centres by other agencies" (APA 1975, p.6).

2.122 The LGCCs have operated in conditions of uncertain finance which have frequently made long-term planning difficult (Stamp

1975, pp.55-56). Initially the staff for LGCCs were to include qualified teachers, a social worker, a triple-certificated nurse and a part-time medical officer and psychologist. However, the APA (1975, p.5) has claimed, "Throughout the entire thirty-five years of the LGCC programme there has not been a time when all Centres were staffed at the level originally set." In the past, teachers at the LGCCs generally have not been recruited with regard to adequate research knowledge or skills. The main portion of research has been conducted by outsiders but achievements in research have not been substantial. Possibly the heaviest criticism on lack of research of the LGCCs comes from the Kramer report (1972, p.23) which concluded:

> "In general, it seems that the Centres do not encourage students to use their resources for post-graduate work. This is evidenced by the very small amount of research that has been based on the Centres in recent years. If at present they were required to justify their existence on the grounds that they offer opportunities for research, they would have very little claim on Government assistance. The Hobart Committee felt that research was not the business of the Centre, and that it should be concerned with teaching the children and demonstrating the best approaches to pre-school education."

Some LGCCs did not conduct research (apart from record keeping) for extended periods of time e.g. no research in Hobart or Adelaide Centres up to 1967, no research at the Melbourne Centre 1953-1967 (APA 1967, pp.16-23).

2.123 The quality of record keeping in the Lady Gowrie centres has been commented on at various intervals over the last 30 years e.g. Edna Hill (pp.106-7) wrote in 1949 that the method of recording by the Centres was unsatisfactory with sketchy data and observer variation in recording - only 462 out of 2077 records were suitable for analysis. Various problems have been mentioned - staff changes and shortages (Clements & Ferguson 1966, p.18), staff bias, wide range in objectivity and quality of work (APA 1967, p.8), lack of research trained staff, pre-school populations that may not necessarily match

researcher sampling needs, lack of funds, heavy demonstration commitments (Scott 1972, pp.8-9).

2.124 Possible ways of improving the research situation have been suggested. Clements and Ferguson (1966, p.20) proposed that outsiders from institutes of higher learning work more with staff in planning and carrying out research projects. Recent initiatives in this direction are mentioned below. The Kramer report (1972) suggested that either the Lady Gowries abandon the research component of their activities or else become attached to tertiary institutions engaged in child development research; neither of these suggestions were implemented.

2.125 It seems likely that recent initiatives will help to improve the research situation. Each Lady Gowrie Centre is locally managed by a committee representing a number of disciplines in early childhood and such committees have experienced some additional representation from the research area. Each LGCC also has a Research and Evaluation Sub-Committee which acts in an advisory capacity. The people on these sub-committees are from a variety of disciplines - including education, health and welfare. Three Centres (Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane) have been employing research assistants or consultants (Plummer 1979, p.14). At Sydney LGCC a Research Project Officer is responsible for research and evaluation. A Research, Evaluation and Development Committee has been established with Dr Trevor Williams as convenor. The Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Australian Early Childhood Association (formerly the Australian Pre-School Association) and when requested meets to consider research/evaluation concerns of the AECA and the LGCCs (Annual Report of the APA 1980, Section 2, p.11).

2.126 New programs have been proposed for the Lady Gowrie Centres (Australia, Senate, October 1978, pp.397-8). The Sydney Centre is developing its own multi-cultural program. The Brisbane Centre is involved in a special program of parental education. The Adelaide Centre is very much concerned with the provision of day care for children from non-English-speaking backgrounds; it also runs

parenting skill programs for high school students. The Hobart Centre has a home-visiting program for children from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The A.C.T.'s Narabundah Early Childhood Education centre has a program which focuses on educational continuity in the transition from pre-school to primary school. Core programs and their components have now been drawn up for all the Centres (The Lady Gowrie Child Centres in Australia 1979). In her meeting with the Senate Estimates Committee on 16 October 1978, Mrs Coleman, Director of the Office of Child Care, said that most of the Lady Gowries, "have not been operating in any sense as research institutions for some time, although it was one of the original concepts of the Commonwealth in funding them. I think we are trying to be as realistic as possible about the speed with which they can move towards that function." Since then work has included a study of the pattern of young children's interactions with peers and adults at Adelaide LGCC, design of an early childhood social skills record and a manual at Perth, design of an employment and motherhood questionnaire at Melbourne and a study of pro-social behaviour of 3-year-old children in mixed age and same age groupings at Brisbane. The Early Childhood Development Officer of the Australian Early Childhood Association (personal communication 1981) has indicated that although these data have been collected as a result of pilot programs, the intention is that they serve as responses to perceived needs within the total early childhood education scene in Australia.

Aboriginal Research

2.127 The Aboriginal studies discussed below deal with cognitive development, special pre-school provisions, Aboriginal Family Education Centres and home teaching programs for mothers. The cognitive development studies generally stem from Piaget's work on conservation; and development is often related to the extent of contact with white societies. Special pre-school provisions are usually based on a more structured approach than that of pre-schools in general. The family centres have especially aimed at orienting themselves to the wishes, needs and initiatives of the local Aboriginal communities. Most studies have been beset by various difficulties. Perhaps the main one is that many white investigators have not been sufficiently attuned to Aboriginal culture.

Investigators have often been unable to obtain "no-treatment" control groups - perhaps partly because of a weariness and cynicism among many Aboriginals of continually being subjects for research by whites who often appear to be the sole beneficiaries of such research. There seems to have occasionally been some reluctance to set specific goals for pre-school cognitive development because of concern that this was an unwarranted imposition of white culture on black communities. This may be one of the factors contributing to rather limited cognitive gains often found among the Aboriginal children who have experienced special pre-school programs. Another factor would probably be the inappropriateness of some of the programs and of many of the cognitive tests.

2.128 In a study of the cognitive development of 145 children at Elcho Island and Hermannsburg, de Lemos (1969) examined the development of conservation - there were tests of quantity, weight, volume, length, area and number: "A 50 per cent level of success was not usually achieved before 10 to 12 years and in some cases was not achieved at all" (pp.76-77). De Lemos attributed this apparent retardation to "the extreme differences in the physical and cultural background of these children as compared with normal European children..." (p.83). New activity methods and a greater variety of activity materials in the schools were found to assist in the development of conservation.

2.129 De Lacy (1970) looked at the relationship between intellectual performance (using four tests of classificatory ability) and the extent of contact with white societies (variables included proportion of school population that was European, whether English was the mother tongue, proportion of school teachers who were European etc.). The relationship was found to be consistent, strong and direct. Extent of contact was further taken into consideration in a study of the reasoning ability in adopted and fostered Aboriginal children. In four of the tests the Aboriginal children adopted from infancy by European families were equal to the comparison European groups and superior to the comparison Aboriginal groups. However, in the two tests of conservation their performance was intermediate

between that of the European and Aboriginal groups (Dasen, de Lacey & Seagrim 1973).

2.130 Nurcombe (1970, p.118) has suggested that certain kinds of experiences, necessary in the pre-school years for full cognitive development may be lacking in an Aboriginal household. Such experiences involve a wide variety of material objects, exposure to a variety of words and syntactical modes, acquisition of language and concepts which determine how the environment is discriminated and ordered. There is also mention of no books, magazines or pictures, few toys and poor language models (Nurcombe & Moffit 1970, pp.130-131). An attempt was made to overcome such deprivation when the University of New South Wales established an experimental pre-school Kindergarten at Bourke in 1969, funded by the Federal Council for Aboriginal Affairs and the Australian Mineral Industries Association. Forty-four children aged between 3 and 4 years, were chosen for the experiment - 22 Aboriginal and 22 European. There were four groups. Two were exposed to a "conventional" pre-school program involving free play, creative expression and unstructured verbal stimulation. The remaining two experienced a modified Bereiter-Engelmann program - here the "teacher instructs the class directly (usually employing concrete objects or drawings as stimuli), by involving the children in individual and unison responses. Through repetition and a gradual increase in the complexity of the material, specific language objectives are aimed at" (Nurcombe & Moffit 1970, p.132). Unlike the Bereiter-Engelmann program, the teacher-pupil ratio per class was one to eleven (compared with three to fifteen for Bereiter-Engelmann) and reading and writing were not taught (Moffit et al 1971, p.139). Language instruction classes were attended for two hours per day. A no-treatment control group for the experiment was considered unacceptable (Moffit et al 1971, p.139). All groups made significant gains in general language performance as measured by the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Ability. The structured group gains were significantly higher than those of the traditional group i.e. 21.8 months compared to 12.8 months over the eight-month period. Follow-up studies (Nurcombe, de Lacey, Moffit & Taylor 1975) have found that Aboriginal children experiencing these programs have shown a marked decrement in their gains (Ashby 1978, p.33).

2.131 In 1970 a project was developed in South Australia under the sponsorship of the Bernard Van Leer Foundation to develop the intellectual abilities of Aboriginal children and prepare them for school entry. Work was carried out at two centres: 1) Maree township 400 miles north of Adelaide - the majority of the children and adults involved were de-tribalised part-Aborigines, 2) Ernabella Mission station in the far north-west of South Australia - full-blood Pitjantjatjara Aborigines were involved. As with the Bourke pre-school study, there was no control group. At Ernabella the language largely used in the pre-school was Pitjantjatjara - the Caldwell Pre-School Inventory test was administered here in this language. At the end of 1971 Ernabella children were found to have "increased their knowledge of the social and physical environment and have also developed many of the pre-number concepts and terms for colours" (Richardson & Teasdale 1973, p.11). At Maree by the end of 1971 some improvements in language development and number skills were noted - the greatest improvements were in language and communication; gains in the development of number concepts were slight (Richardson & Teasdale 1973, p.37). Attendance at Maree fluctuated considerably. Despite attempts to encourage parent involvement there occurred a decline in average attendance by mothers.

2.132 Aboriginal Family Education Centres were developed through the influence of New Zealand play centres and Maori Family Pre-schools. In 1969 they were initiated in New South Wales under a grant from the Bernard Van Leer Foundation. Over five years, twelve AFECs were set up. It was aimed to have the centres developed and operated by Aborigines with family groups attending together and Aboriginal adults acting as teachers. Self-initiated informal play was to be characteristic of the children's activities and project staff were to confine their role to one of advising on request (Scott & Darbyshire 1973? pp.10-11). Grey feels (1974, p.366) that gains from the AFECs were revealed in the children showing an eagerness to learn, increased concentration, perceptual growth, vocabulary advancements, shyness gone and leadership. At the same time it must be recalled that Grey (1974, p.347) wrote, "Objective style evaluation was also fruitless for AFEC action-research because the objectivity

required depends first upon ability to observe. When Aboriginal values are still so little known and so little understood, then observation has to be within the values of the observer who, if he is not aware that there is anything different of which to be aware, is unable to observe what there is to be objective about." Grey acknowledges a number of failures. He feels that disappointing progress was made in changing the quality of interactions amongst numbers of parents and children, in obtaining a stable practice of regular play sessions, in involving more than one family network in each community and in conveying "the full meaning of AFEC to visitors such as Department of Education officers from the States or from the Federal Government..." (Grey 1974, p.357).

2.133 A study by Scott and Darbyshire (1973?), who were based at Monash University, was carried out from 1969 to 1972 and was funded by the Van Leer Foundation. The project sought to initiate contact with Aboriginal families, support parental roles and home contributions to the children's development and provide a bridge towards regular pre-school services (Scott and Darbyshire 1973? p.48). Two settings were chosen - one country (Swan Hill), the other metropolitan (the suburbs of East Preston, Reservoir and West Heidelberg in Melbourne). Ashby (1978, p.34) refers to the project conducting teaching sessions in the home and using an "observing and modelling" situation. Scott and Darbyshire mention the following points about their project. A valid initial test score could not be obtained for some children (p.10), there was no use of control groups (p.191) and there were substantial problems with the field work relating to the pre-school education of children of Aboriginal families (p.242). Nevertheless the researchers felt that an improvement was achieved in the conditions conducive to learning (p.191).

2.134 A project on extending the teaching competence of urban Aboriginal mothers was carried out in Brisbane between March 1972 and December 1973 (Watts & Henry 1978). There were two intervention programs in which the parent educator visited each home once a fortnight and introduced to the child, in the mother's presence,

certain developmental games, toys and books. In the home teaching program this was followed by a teaching session. In the library program the visits were short and allowed for the choosing of new materials and the return of previous borrowings. In both programs a meeting of mothers was held once a fortnight. After one year there was a new intake of mothers and some changes were made to the experiment. Library home visits became weekly instead of fortnightly. The program concentrated on 4-year-olds rather than 5-year-olds. Three Aboriginal Parent Educators joined the program (Watts & Henry 1978, p.91).

2.135 Attendance at the mothers' meetings was generally poor, averaging 50 per cent and showing a marked reduction in the second year. The parent educators felt that overall the families in the library program benefited more than those in the home teaching program. Sampling problems may have been partly responsible here - there appeared to be a higher proportion of stable families in the library program. It was also felt that the two programs became more similar to each other in the second year (Watts & Henry 1978, p.91). A general conclusion was that the project "seems to have some favourable outcomes with a significant number of the project mothers" (Watts & Henry 1978, p.173). At the same time it was acknowledged that in the experimental groups only ten of the 33 children exhibited significant gains with the Stanford-Binet IQ tests (Watts & Henry 1978, p.149). No control group families were used in the project. It was also pointed out:

> "The program was deliberately unstructured. While some overseas programs have reported significant improvements in children in programs where the mother's interaction with her children have been predetermined and highly structured, we felt that an approach such as this would be of little attractiveness to mothers in our project" (Watts & Henry 1978, p.142).

As with other intervention studies in this section there is a tendency to state that certain gains have been made without specifying and/or

quantifying the gains let alone indicating how much the intervention contributed to the gains. The experimenters are obviously aware of these shortcomings themselves but solutions do not seem to be readily available.

XIII DISCUSSION

2.136 As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, research on early childhood education still has much to accomplish. To date it "has failed to show that traditional pre-school education leads to significant and lasting changes in children's social or intellectual development" (Pringle & Naidoo 1975, p.154). Evans concludes, "Much more is advocated for infant education than we have solid empirical evidence to justify." He goes on to state that no one knows the most suitable combinations of experiences and the most desirable conditions for infant stimulation (Evans 1975, pp.335-6). He feels it can "be argued that much more basic research regarding developmental processes in infancy must precede the development of any prescriptive, authoritative infant education program" (Evans 1975, p.?9). White et al (1978, p.185) have repeatedly claimed, "that surprisingly little has been established through child development research that would help us fully understand the psychological growth of the very young child. We have been chided for these statements by our colleagues on numerous occasions. Regardless of that criticism, our position still stands: especially for the child five days to 3 years of age, the amount of relevant fundamental and applied research that has actually been done in proportion to the amount of esoteric and relatively impractical work that has been done is distressingly small." Similar sentiments are expressed in the introduction to this chapter. Other chapter sections also suggest areas where more research is needed such as with regard to suitable pupil/teacher ratios.

2.137 That this situation exists is partly because of the relatively under-developed state of social science research in general. Organisational deficiences have also contributed. Major "educational or social initiatives have tended to be evaluated only in

retrospect, if at all ..." (Pringle & Naidoo 1975, p.154). In Britain there has been no single experimental pre-school group to try out different programs (Van Der Eyken 1974, p.196). Only in the U.S. has there been much emphasis on evaluating the effects of programs (Kamerman 1975, para.244). Research has been fragmented because of the lack of a super-agency to give direction (La Crosse et al 1968, p.106). It is therefore not surprising that a number of countries have expanded pre-school education without conclusive evidence that the desired effects can be achieved (Anderson 1974, p.124).

2.138 Little has been produced from research on international comparisons. For example, Swedish children cannot be differentiated from English children at the age of ten years with regard to reading ability even though the English children have spent two years longer at school (Austin 1976, p.352). There are few national differences in academic achievement and it is not possible to isolate a single variable for study while holding the others constant (Austin 1976, p.60).

2.139 Future research needs to give more attention to the problem of "self-selection of subjects". Families participating in early childhood studies appear to be more interested in education than other families. More account needs to be taken of effects on test performance of young children such as from test sophistication and parents becoming more child-oriented as a result of participation in these kinds of studies (White et al 1979, p.161).

2.140 The following listed areas of ignorance date back to 1968. It is possible that more recent work has not been sufficiently allowed for in this chapter but it must be remembered that interest and activity in early childhood research has very much subsided since the early 1970s. In general too, significant breakthroughs are given ample publicity and would therefore be fairly difficult to overlook.

2.141 With regard to early childhood, there is ignorance of: "(1) the course of development of important infant abilities, (2) individual behavioural differences, (3) infant interests, (4) infant environments and (5) the laws of development" (White 1971,

p.133). There is a need for: 1) an understanding of pre-school effects, 2) a determining of priorities for these effects, 3) sensitive readiness tests, 4) age appropriate curricula, and 5) flexible programs (La Crosse et al 1968, p.14). There is a need for samples of a great variety of children's language, more research on bilingualism and cognitive development, more analysis of readers and learning to read, identifying and testing more aspects of language and knowing more about the basic parameters of early language development (La Crosse et al 1968, pp.53-60).

2.142 There is a need for developmental studies of the emergence of curiosity (La Crosse et al 1968, p.76; White et al 1978, p.189). There is a need for a conceptual model for the area of cognition; a need to pursue how language and concept learning are related (La Crosse et al 1968, p.89). More techniques are needed to assess human abilities in the first years of life; techniques are particularly deficient for assessing language development (White et al 1978, p.189). There is a need for more valid and reliable tests, especially for social and personality development; cognitive test faults need to be rectified (La Crosse et al 1968, p.99). Little investigation has been carried out on the years between age one and three (La Crosse et al 1968, p.107). It would be valuable if qualities in young children such as personal fulfillment, emotional security, self-esteem, generosity, cooperativeness, responsibility and compassion could be more easily measured (Bronfenbrenner 1974, p.2). There are few studies of teaching strategies in pre-school (Tizard 1975, p.8). And there is a need for research on teacher training (Austin 1976, p.54).

2.143 More generally, White (1971, p.136) points to the need for researchers to sharpen their observational tools and to collect 20 years of solid natural history. There is a need for a great deal of ethological and ecological work so that sound theory can develop (La Crosse et al 1968, p.107). White et al (1978, pp.190-191) go on to say, "Trying to relate the orientations and findings of people from seven or more different disciplines is no mean epistemological task. It is our judgment that what is centrally lacking is some sort of

guidance from people skilled in philosophy of science with respect to this heterogeneous collection of ideas and work ... Not only do we need guidance from philosophers of science in methods and in weighing the relative values of different types of evidence, but we also need to have our new research personnel undergo some sort of exposure to principles of epistemology and to different aspects of the scientific method." There is a need for longitudinal studies to follow the effects long after pre-school experience; control groups are required and assessment techniques must be age-appropriate (La Crosse et al 1968 p.109). Tough suggests further study of the advantaged child (Tizard 1975, p.58). Connolly and Davies suggest work on the extent pre-school prepares the child for school (Tizard 1975, p.64). Another suggestion is that Colleges and Institutes of Education work with teachers in schools on research projects (Tizard 1975, p.74). Bruner sees the need to learn of pre-school difficulties from the point of view of teachers, parents, children, local authorities etc. (Tizard 1975, p.109). And Halsey suggests a government survey to discover the effects of government policy on pre-school attendance (Tizard 1975, p.118).

2.144 Anderson sums it all up with the following:

> "If vigorous evaluation is built in to the pilot programmes (particularly follow-up studies), and the results fed back to the system, we will begin to accumulate the evidence which will help provide answers to the questions of whether pre-school education should have a high priority in the list of educational needs, and if so, for which children, at what ages and with what intention" (Anderson 1974, p.126).

XIV SUMMARY

2.145 Despite the very large body of literature available, much of which has accumulated since the 1960s, there is relatively little which indicates how to improve the education of young children. There

is evidence that environment has an important effect on early development with regard to language, emotional, social and intellectual development (also motivation and curiosity). It has been found that appropriateness and timing of stimulation is important for the child's development. Also important is a close and secure relationship with a care-giver. Comparisons have been made between the home and the early childhood centre - each may produce different effects on the personality of the child. The effects of the early childhood centre are not necessarily adverse. Marked physical and mental retardation may result in institutions where only basic physical care is provided for young children. Despite the data on maternal deprivation it would seem that children of working mothers may not suffer significant detrimental effects if good substitute arrangements are capable of being made.

2.146 Young children at educational risk include those from very large low-income families and low stimulus child-minding establishments, from one-parent families, those separated from parents, from minority groups, the illegitimate and the handicapped. Early childhood centres can detect and remedy many handicaps.

2.147 Often children described as "culturally deprived" are deficient in their knowledge of middle-class language which society as a whole expects to be taught to children. A possible solution here is to use both the children's native language or dialect and standard English in the classroom. Important aids to language development include talking to infants, specificity of adult directions to children and reinforcement to infant vocalisation such as contingent smiling. Little is known on the relationship between language and thinking. Early childhood centres may promote language development through stability in staff retention, staff autonomy, teacher provocations to self-expression and communication, high levels of interaction between staff and children, encouraging talk among children in preschool and the adult acting as a resource person. Special intensive language programs have produced marked gains e.g. Distar, the Blank and Solomon Approach and Peabody Language Development Kit; these programs are highly structured and may involve pattern drill.

2.148 Educational experiences in the home can be enriched if they allow for the importance of attention seeking behaviour (as defined by White et al 1978, p.94) and minimise restrictions of movement for the child aged 7-24 months.

2.149 Structured programs expecially geared for non-middle-class children include those of Bereiter and Engelmann, Smilansky, Weikart's Perry Preschool Project and Montessori. The Montessori program is specifically designed for the development of cognitive skills, ordering, classifying, seriating, sensory discrimination skills, self-selection and self-pacing. The Montessori method has been criticised for relative lack of emphasis on verbal interaction and language development. There is evidence that some children may be beneficially introduced to reading before they enter primary school.

2.150 Much of current pre-school education involves play. This is thought to help in the mastery of emotions and in integrating fantasy and reality. Play allows for learning from self-initiation, exploration, concentration on the task-process rather than the task-goal, imitating adults and practising real life roles.

2.151 There is no international consensus on teacher training with regard to formal school prerequisites and the amount or quality of specific training. Some feel that traditional pre-school teachers are not suitable for intensive pre-school work with disadvantaged children because their background has biased them against this approach. Children have been shown to benefit from care-givers with qualifications in child-related fields - these care-givers interacted more with children (interaction in the form of questioning, responding, instructing, praising and comforting). Research does not permit precise specifications on group sizes and child/staff ratios although small group benefits have been observed. There is still little agreement on a set of goals for pre-school education. In order to promote efficiency and rationality there have been moves for the increased coordination of services for young children. Unfortunately to date coordination generally has not worked and has often increase

costs rather than reduced them. Sometimes this has been because coordination has threatened the interests of those providing services, sometimes because of lack of clarity as to what the coordination was meant to achieve.

2.152 The U.S. Project Head Start began in 1965 as a summer program involving 560,000 children; by 1967 there was a substantial emphasis on year-long groups. While Head Start achieved substantial health benefits and community involvement it had little success in preventing educational failure or in achieving long-term academic benefits. Disappointing results have also been attributed to Project Follow-Through which was designed to maintain the initial gains achieved by Project Head Start. There are considerable doubts about the validity of more recent claims that initial gains from Head Start later re-emerge; also that home intervention programs work.

2.153 Parents have much to contribute in the pre-school education of their children - as in talking a great deal to children (at their level), being interested, providing access to many objects and diverse experiences, giving encouragement, demonstrating and explaining at the child's instigation, being firm and consistent, teaching in small but frequent amounts.

2.154 Much remains to be done in Australian research on pre-school education. Major studies include an evaluation of pre-school provisions for geographically isolated children in Queensland, Bragget's study of the benefits of pre-school for above average intelligence children, the Mt Druitt early childhood project for disadvantaged children (in which five "different" programs were compared), the de Lemos study of cognitive development of Aboriginal children, the experimental pre-school kindergarten at Bourke which worked with Aboriginal and European children, Aboriginal Family Education Centres in New South Wales and a project on extending the teaching competence of urban Aboriginal mothers. In the Aboriginal studies there were difficulties because of insufficient knowledge of Aboriginal culture, inability to use "no-treatment" control groups, inappropriateness of cognitive tests and a difficulty in specifying

and/or quantifying the gains from intervention. The Lady Gowrie Child Centres began in the early 1940s and were set up partly to conduct research on the care and instruction of the young child. Despite frequent attempts to improve the research situation the research accomplishments of the LGCCs have been generally disappointing - one difficulty has been to successfully integrate the skills of the pre-school teachers and the researchers.

2.155 Research still has much to accomplish in the whole field of pre-school education. More knowledge is needed on the developmental processes in infancy, individual behavioural differences, infant interests, infant environments, pre-school effects, age appropriate curricula, children's language development, cognitive development, learning to read, curiosity, the relationship between language and concept learning, tests, the years between one and three. There is a need for improved observational tools and much more observation, an intellectual framework for the present heterogeneous collection of ideas and work, and long-term individual studies on the effects of pre-school experience.

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Chapter 3 - EXPERIENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES

I INTRODUCTION

3.1 In this chapter the countries referred to are those which bear most resemblance to Australia by reason of their social and economic structure and way of life. However, it is important to bear in mind that in individual countries, various forces including historical, traditional, demographic and political events have influenced the development of early childhood education in ways which make it less readily comparable with the Australian situation. For instance, the age of entry to primary school varies among countries, from five to seven years, and this has a bearing on policies. Those with a higher age of school entry may appear to have a wider provision of pre-school facilities, whereas those where entry is earlier may not. In most, if not all countries, the average five or six-year-old is probably considered ready for some form of specifically educational experience. Thus in Sweden where school entry is at age seven, there is a firm government commitment to extending the provision for pre-school children, and in particular for the five and six year age group. By contrast, in the United Kingdom with school entry at age five, the commitment to extending it through public funding is less marked.

3.2 To take another example: in France there has been a strong tradition of early childhood services of various kinds which include education programs. This is largely a function of the considerable number of working mothers over a long period, which in turn is partly the result of the depletion of the male population in two World Wars and general social and economic conditions. Similar observations could be made about many Eastern European countries and also to some extent Israel and China, which, in their drive to achieve industrialisation in underdeveloped, largely agricultural economies, encouraged all their able-bodied citizens into the workforce. Among them were mothers of young children and the State was obliged to

provide the necessary facilities. It is important to remember that the "working mother" is not a new phenomenon (e.g. see Ryan & Conlon 1975, p.2 & p.34). Large numbers of married women have always worked beside their husbands in subsistence farming which, unlike factory work, does not require special provision for young children. Relatives such as grandmothers were often available to assist. Urbanisation, which comes with industrial development, severed links with relatives and created a need for child care. The widespread phenomenon of married women whose responsibilities are confined to care of children and home is an historically recent feature of affluent economies.

3.3 In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, postwar economic difficulties limited the expansion of nursery schooling which, being non-compulsory, was accorded a lower funding priority. This coincided with the closing down of wartime day nurseries as official policy was opposed to day care for pre-school age children. These examples serve to indicate how events or prevailing conditions have moulded countries' approaches to pre-school education. In some cases it was largely an outgrowth of an existing commitment to providing comprehensive day care services, in others there was an acknowledgement of the perceived benefits of early childhood education independent of any official policy towards day care. Thus the assumptions behind a 1945 British Ministry of Health circular were that,

> "day care outside the home is necessary or beneficial under certain circumstances ... nursery schooling is beneficial for everyone" (Tizard et al 1976, p.74).

Of course, in the U.K. as elsewhere (e.g. North America, Australia), such official acknowledgement of the value of early childhood education for many years did not necessarily imply any government intention of actually making it available for everyone.

Historical Perspectives

3.4 In many countries facilities for the care and, as a by-product, education of the very young began in response to concern about the health and welfare of poor children. In the 19th century

with the rise of industrialisation, it was seen that some provision was needed for the children of mothers who worked long hours in factories or were otherwise unable to care for them. Early childhood services thus came to be associated in some countries with the church or other charitable organisations, state or private, and the legacy of this association is in evidence to the present day. By the 1920s increasing interest was focussed on research into young children's intellectual development and their social and emotional adjustment in addition to concern for their physical needs. Theories concerning the acquisition of cognitive and other skills in early childhood opened up the possibility of adding a further, specifically educational, dimension to early childhood services over and beyond custodial care. In many countries middle class people who did not require day care for their children but who valued education highly, were alerted to the possibilities for enhancing their children's development at an early age through educational programs. However, the fact that pre-school education has remained non-compulsory has tended to mean that governments have felt no obligation to fund it to the extent that other levels of education are funded. In the 1930s and 1940s the countries we are considering were preoccupied first with the economic depression and then with World War II. By the 1950s and 1960s public funding authorities were forced to concentrate on providing sufficient primary and secondary teachers and classrooms for the children of the postwar 'baby boom'. All forms of post-secondary education also entered an expansionary period at this time and pre-school education suffered from benign neglect, continuing to be seen as a non-essential extra.

3.5 By the beginning of the 1970s some pre-school facilities were available in most countries but these were usually clustered in the more densely populated urban areas and education-oriented programs tended to be most heavily utilised by the middle classes. From the mid 1960s onwards and particularly in the United States, concern was felt at the way poor and otherwise disadvantaged children quickly fell into a seemingly inevitable pattern of failure from their first years at school. Hopes were expressed that compensatory pre-school programs might benefit disadvantaged children by equipping them with the sorts

of learning skills which middle class children acquired at home, skills that seemed relevant to later success in school. It was believed that such programs might help overcome what were seen as the deficiencies of a home background which apparently predisposed children to poor performance in the school setting. Enthusiasm gathered momentum among politicians and the public for compensatory programs of which the U.S. Project Head Start is the best known example. When the time came to evaluate the programs which had been implemented, the results were often disappointing or at least ambiguous. Bronfenbrenner (1974 - see chapter 2 for more details) in his assessment of various programs noted that many of them seemed to produce initial gains in children's performances but that these appeared to 'wash out' one or two years later. He suggested that programs which included substantial parent involvement, sometimes entailing visits by teachers to children's homes, seemed rather more promising. There is now some question whether some of these programs may have been more effective than was originally thought. At least one longitudinal study (Lazar 1977 - see chapter 2) suggests that children who went through certain pre-school programs are now less likely to need to repeat a grade in elementary (i.e. primary) school.

The Present Situation and Beyond

3.6 In some countries the American experience may have served to dampen enthusiasm for the introduction of compensatory pre-schooling on a large scale. Some countries were not attracted to the concept in any case but most have nevertheless continued to express considerable interest in the possibilities of early childhood education as the continuing activities of the OECD in this area testify. However, depressed economic conditions in the late 1970s may well have made some governments cautious, in the absence of more conclusive research results, about committing large amounts of public funds towards elaborate educational programs. The situation today in most countries could perhaps be described as one of guarded optimism. There is a general belief among educationalists and the public in the value of early childhood educational experience. Given the necessary expertise and resources it is seen as promoting various aspects of the child's development. Government responsiveness to demands for early

childhood education will depend upon the allocation of priorities as among various sectors of education which in turn will be influenced by overall economic and social conditions, including demographic patterns. In all the countries under consideration the number of children born in the 1970s has shown a dramatic decline by comparison with the two preceding decades. If, as seems likely, this trend towards low levels of fertility continues (see Table 3.1 below) the implication could be either that governments become reluctant to meet demands for early childhood education as it is relevant to a smaller segment of the population or alternatively, governments might be more willing to respond because expenditure will be less. Early childhood education is clearly at the turning point: the experience of the next few years should show whether countries are prepared to commit themselves further because it is a popular cause or else curtail existing provisions because its benefits cannot be proven unequivocally. The dilemma is likely to be made acute by the continuing economic recession and the resultant heightened competition for resources among various sectors of education.

TABLE 3.1*

Fertility Rates

(Live births per 100 women aged 15-44)

	1950	1960	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Australia	10.7	11.2	9.9	8.1	7.0	7.2	7.1
Belgium	7.8	8.9	7.3	6.0			
Canada	12.1	13.1	8.1	6.9	6.7	6.2	6.1
Denmark	8.7	8.2	7.1	6.9	6.6	6.4	6.5
France	9.8	9.5	8.3	6.9	8.0	7.4	7.0
Germany(F.R.)	6.6	8.0	6.7	4.8	4.6	5.0	5.3
Italy	8.4	8.2	8.0	7.3	7.1	7.7	7.5
Netherlands	10.3	10.3	8.8	6.1	5.1	5.1	5.0
New Zealand	12.1	13.7	11.3	8.9	7.8	6.9	6.2
Norway	8.7	8.9	8.9	7.3	6.4	6.1	6.0
Sweden	7.7	6.8	7.0	6.5	6.5	6.2	6.4
U.K.	7.5	8.8	8.5	6.4	7.2	7.8	7.9
U.S.A.	10.6	11.9	8.8	6.7	7.0	7.3	7.0

* Adapted from Table 1 in CERI 1978, p.6.

II CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS OVERSEAS

3.7 The following paragraphs give a very brief description of provisions for early childhood education in several countries. Countries are taken alphabetically and in each country (while some provision (e.g. creches, family day care schemes) exists for children of working parents) the discussion is largely confined to programs which the countries themselves consider to be specifically oriented towards education. In some instances these programs constitute part of the day care provision, in others there is some separation between care and education. Inevitably, the amount of information presented for each country reflects its availability in English. Thus some countries unfortunately receive only scant coverage making comparisons hazardous. Nevertheless an attempt is made at the end of this section to draw some tentative conclusions highlighting the problems and policy options common to most countries.

Belgium

3.8 Belgium has a long history of pre-school type services going back to the nineteenth century (Austin 1976, p.241). A big expansion in nursery schools occurred after World War II. Compulsory schooling begins at age six and over 90 per cent of three to five-year-olds attend free nursery schools, some of which are State run while others are run privately. Control is vested in the Minister of Education and many are attached to primary schools (Austin 1976, p.49). In addition, 23 per cent of two-year-olds are in nursery schools. Hours are long (8.30 am to 4.15 pm or later) to cater for children of working mothers. Education is considered unnecessary before age three although this view is being challenged and increasing pressure has been exerted to admit two-year-olds (Tizard et al 1976, p.113).

3.9 The training of pre-school teachers is virtually the same as that for primary teachers with students being admitted at age 15 to teacher training colleges for four years of study (Austin 1976, p.54 & p.255). Pupil-teacher ratios are approximately 20:1 (Austin 1976,

p.256). Teaching methods rely heavily on Decroly (teacher-planned activities) but the theories of Froebel and Montessori have some influence (Austin 1976, pp.259-260).

Canada

3.10 Historically the provision of early childhood education in Canada has had a middle class orientation. It began in the late 19th century as an activity for wealthy children whose parents could afford it. Only later were programs directed towards poor children (Austin 1976, p.30). Nursery schools are often privately run as either a cooperative venture or for profit. Children aged three or four attend for half-day sessions. Kindergartens, some private, some attached to public schools, cater for five-year-olds (prior to compulsory schooling, usually at age 6) and also sometimes four-year-olds (Austin 1976, p.123).

3.11 The following illustrates the diversity of the provision. In Alberta children between the ages of 4½ and 5½ may participate in a publicly funded multidisciplinary Early Childhood Services Program. Alberta also funds programs for handicapped children between the ages of 3½ and 4½. Some school boards in Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba provide junior kindergartens for four-year-olds and Manitoba may admit children at age 3. Some provinces do not provide any publicly controlled pre-school programs or kindergartens for five-year-olds. Private kindergartens and nursery schools may be licensed by either departments of education or departments of social services. Licensing regulations for day care centres, play schools and nurseries are under the jurisdiction of departments of public welfare or social services (Education in Canada 1977, pp. 8-9).

3.12 Control of pre-schools rests with each regional government and funding at the provincial level has become more important in recent years. In the English-speaking provinces programs appear to be usually of the less structured type and are influenced by the ideas of Froebel, McMillan and Dewey. In Quebec and in Roman Catholic pre-schools in other provinces the more formal French ecole maternelle provides a model. There children are exposed to planned

sensorimotor and manipulative activities (Austin 1976, p.131). Teachers are generally required to be high school graduates (aged 17 to 18) and are given a one to two year training in teacher training colleges (Austin 1976, p.125) although some courses may extend to three or four years.

3.13 In the 1960s in Canada, as in the United States, some hastily conceived and executed compensatory pre-school programs for disadvantaged children produced disappointing results. It is now realised that expectations for short-term programs were unrealistic given the deep-rooted nature of cultural deprivation and that programs varied considerably in quality and clarity of objectives (Austin 1976, p.134).

Denmark

3.14 Since 1976 all responsibility for early childhood care and education has rested with local authorities which may determine their own priorities for their social welfare budgets which fund these services (CERI 1977, p.19). Nursery schools provide day care which includes educational activities for children from the age of about 2½ to six (Friis & From 1975, p.23). School entry is at age seven but if parents wish, all six-year-old children are entitled to enter a nursery class (Danish Schools 1976, p.1). Approximately two-thirds of nursery schools are privately run and all are subsidised, payment being according to means (one-quarter of places are free). In 1976 about 27 per cent of all three to six-year-olds were in nursery schools (Tizard et al 1976, p.118). In addition, there are kindergarten classes which expanded during the 1960s and which cater for children in their last year before entering school. The classes resemble those provided in nursery schools but are run in connection with the school system. They operate for 15 hours a week and cater for approximately 40 per cent of six-year-olds by comparison with 27 per cent of this age group who are accommodated in nursery schools (Tizard et al 1976, p.117).

3.15 Teachers who work with the three to six-year-old age group outside institutions are trained at teachers colleges. Their

educational level and length of training are the same as those of 'social pedagogues' trained in colleges for child care workers under the Ministry of Social Welfare. The latter work with children under three (CERI 1977, p.23). Regulations provide that parents may participate in nursery schools and kindergartens. At least two members of the board governing a centre are chosen by parents and their decision-making powers extend to budget and program guidelines (CERI 1977, p.29).

France

3.16 In contrast with other countries, the major part of pre-school education is full-time, provided by a widespread network of ecoles maternelles supervised by the Ministry of Public Education (David & Lezine 1975, p.86). These originally aimed to provide care and protection for children, especially poor children, and their concern with the educational process and children's intellectual development evolved gradually after World War II. Children are admitted at age two and may stay until they are six (school entry age). Some schools are State run, some are private and there are some nursery schools attached to primary schools (Austin 1976. p.178). Historically, the reasons for the extensive provision of early childhood education in France may be traced to a long tradition of both early education and of working mothers (Austin 1976, p.181). The ecoles maternelles may open as early as 7 am, educational activities commence at 8.30 or 9 am and they close at 4.30 or 5 o'clock but children may remain until 6 or 7 pm. Schools are open all day Saturday (Austin 1976, p.188). Attendance is free and the central government provides the bulk of funding including 100 per cent of teachers' salaries. Private, usually Roman Catholic, ecoles maternelles are eligible for financial assistance. In accepting assistance, they submit to pedagogical and financial controls and thus have come to resemble public schools. The commune (community or local government authority) provides the cost of supplies and equipment, maintenance and non-teaching domestic help. Instructional methods are reasonably formal as is to be expected with the large numbers of children for whom teachers are responsible (generally about 40 per class). Up until recently parent participation has not been a feature of the

pre-school system (Austin 1976, pp.194-200). Estimated attendance rates are: at age 2, 23 per cent; at 3, 70 per cent; at 4, 93 per cent; and at 5, 96 per cent (Tizard et al 1976, pp.113-114). Teacher education courses range from two to five years depending on whether the teacher has obtained a baccalaureat. Students with the latter qualification would commence training at age 18 (Austin 1976, p.181). They receive their training together with primary teachers but obtain practical experience in nursery schools (Austin 1976, pp.191-192).

3.17 Private kindergartens exist but are apparently decreasing in number. They have similar educational programs to ecoles maternelles but are under the control of the Department of Maternal and Child Care. Some consideration has been given to whether the ecoles maternelles should come under this agency but this has been resisted by people who believe the nursery schools would lose their educational emphasis in the process and become simply providers of custodial care (David & Lezine 1975, p.33).

3.18 The administration of the ecoles maternelles within the Ministry of Education is almost fully independent of the structures responsible for primary and secondary schooling. There are five Inspectrices Generales, all based in Paris but who constantly travel to the provinces. These women have no administrative responsibilities but act as consultants by providing educational advice within the educational system generally and to the Minister for Education in particular (David & Lezine 1975, pp.86-87).

3.19 For each of France's 95 departments there is an Inspecteur d'Academie and under him are Inspectrices (usually women) for each level of education including the ecoles maternelles. The Inspectrice has wide-ranging administrative responsibilities including supervision of the principals and teachers in the schools. She exerts a strong influence on the nature of the educational programs offered in her area. The Inspectrice is assisted by a pedagogic counsellor who spends most of her time with new teachers. By law every community with a population of 2000 or more must establish an ecole maternelle near to but separate from the primary school. Smaller communities

have a nursery school class (called enfantine) located in the primary school. There is increased pressure to admit children at the ages of 2½ or 2 rather than 3 because the ecole maternelle is free, unlike creches or family day care. Directrices of ecoles maternelles endeavour to postpone children's entry until they are toilet-trained (David & Lezine 1975, pp.88-89).

3.20 Teaching may be quite formal with even the youngest children expected to sit at desks for part of the day. More recently there have been some moves towards allowing children more time to choose activities and explore (David & Lezine 1975, p.91). Parents often are keen to see children learn to read and write and programs tend to be teacher-directed with the child as recipient rather than initiator (David & Lezine 1975, p.86). In general, programs for two to four-year-olds stress sensori-motor activities, intellectual growth and language and children are freer to pursue their individual interests whereas for four to five-year-olds the atmosphere is more formal and group activity becomes more important. For the five to six-year-olds, readiness for formal schooling is an added feature of programs although free play is still allowed (David & Lezine 1975, p.90). Some of the schools are introducing bilingual education (Austin 1976, pp.203-204). The Decroly technique of focussing on areas of interest is favoured (David & Lezine 1975, p.94). Special experimental programs are being developed to enhance verbal and cognitive skills among children of immigrant workers (David & Lezine 1975, p.101). Research and evaluation are being undertaken to improve the effectiveness of programs and to ease the transition to primary school (Austin 1976, p.202). The latter is still considered problematical especially in view of the large numbers of children needing to repeat classes (David & Lezine 1975, p.100) In response to parental wishes there is emphasis on disciplined behaviour (David & Lezine 1975, p.94).

3.21 Teachers' salaries are low and some in-service training is considered necessary, for example, through the distribution of Ministry of Education periodicals which aim to disseminate new ideas (David & Lezine 1975, p.99).

Germany (Federal Republic)

3.22 In Germany 75 per cent of kindergartens or nursery schools are run by voluntary bodies (Austin 1976, p.278) although there are some operated by the State. All are subsidised by State (Lander) and local governments (Austin 1976, p.286). The Lander are responsible for policy and funding. At the federal level the relevant ministry is Youth, Family and Health and also the Youth Welfare Service. Parents must pay according to their means up to a certain maximum fee. In 1973 places were available for approximately 44 per cent of the three to five-year-old age group. In 1972 the provision catered to 17 percent of three-year-olds, 39 per cent of four-year-olds, 54 per cent of five-year-olds and 53 per cent of six-year-olds (who were about to enter primary school). Some nursery schools have full day places for children of working parents but attendance is generally only for half a day (Tizard et al 1976, p.115). Government policy aims to provide nursery school places for all three to five-year-olds who want them (estimated to be at least 75 per cent of this age group in 1972) and a more specific goal is to provide places for 85 per cent of five-year-olds by 1980 (Tizard et al 1976, p.116; Federal Republic of Germany 1976).

3.23 Froebel's methods, with emphasis on the value of play, are still favoured but there is interest in more structured, compensatory programs for disadvantaged children. Some kindergartens have cognition-oriented programs based on the theory of Piaget. There are some which emphasise motivation and academic preparation for schooling and others, left-wing in outlook, which stress social reform (Austin 1976, p.274). Because kindergarten teachers are responsible to Lander youth offices, not education ministries, they are regarded as workers in child care rather than education. In fact, they may be termed "child care officers" (Austin 1976, pp.283-284). Their training varies from place to place as it is the responsibility of each Land (Austin 1976, p.282) and is said generally to reflect this welfare orientation. Because of some dissatisfaction with the quality of kindergartens, the profession of 'social pedagogue' was developed. These persons are appointed to supervise kindergarten teachers after three years at a polytechnic and one year of experience. Their

presence has caused some discontent among experienced kindergarten teachers (CERI 1977, p.22). Priority in allocating pre-school places is given to children from large families, children with working parents and poor children (Tizard et al 1976, p.115). Pupil/teacher ratios vary from 40 or 50:1 in poorer, rural areas to 15:1 in larger urban centres (Austin 1976, p.275). There is growing interest in parent participation and some State laws provide specifically for it.

Italy

3.24 Italy's pre-school provision has been characterised by the heavy involvement of the private sector - almost invariably the Roman Catholic church (Austin 1976, p.208). In 1968 the Government began to provide public pre-schools which now cater for approximately 10 per cent of all children attending some form of pre-school (Austin 1976, p.208; Tizard et al 1976, p.117). The Minister of Education is responsible for education at all levels, including pre-schools (Austin 1976, p.218). In all, approximately 60 per cent of the relevant age group i.e. 3 to 6 (school entry age) attend. It was hoped to raise this to 86 per cent by the end of 1978 (Tizard et al 1976, p.117). State run pre-schools are free and have a lower pupil/teacher ratio but their hours tend to be shorter and less flexible (Austin 1976, p.220; Tizard et al 1976, p.117). The teachers in the State schools are required to hold a diploma but teachers enter training colleges at age 14 after nine years' compulsory education and their training, generally about three years, is not particularly demanding (Austin 1976, p.222). The 1968 legislation (Act no.444 of 1968) states that one of the major purposes of the pre-school is to prepare children for primary school and parental involvement is specifically encouraged (Austin 1976, p.208 & p.217).

3.25 Approximately 86 per cent of pre-school teachers follow the Agazzi method which encourages children to engage in spontaneous activity and exploration. A further 6 per cent adhere to the Montessori method with its emphasis on a prepared environment (Austin 1976, p.232).

3.26 Day care facilities are both State and privately run but on a relatively small scale as the labour force participation of women is not particularly high (Austin 1976, pp.211-212; Tizard et al 1970, p.117).

The Netherlands

3.27 Religious denominations, Catholic and Protestant, have always been deeply involved in pre-school education and in 1973 were responsible for approximately 60 per cent of all nursery schools. Both they and publicly (municipality) run nursery schools charge fees. Private school fees tend to be higher but as all are subsidised by the national government, fees are reasonably low (Tizard et al 1976, p.116). Since World War II a small number of special nursery schools have been established for very poor children aged between 1 and 4 years (Austin 1976, p.310). The Ministry of Education is responsible for all nursery schools for children aged 4 to 6 years but all provision for children under 4 years is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Welfare (CERI 1977, p.19).

3.28 The main influences on the development of early childhood education have been Froebel, Montessori and, more recently, Langeveld who stressed the role of the family (Austin 1976, p.300). Montessori schools constitute about 4 per cent of the total and are used almost exclusively by the middle classes (Austin 1976, p.322). School entry is at age seven and nursery schooling is available for the majority of the four to six-year-old age group: in 1973, 88 per cent of four-year-olds were catered for and 96 per cent of five-year-olds. The nursery schools are open for three hours in the morning and two in the afternoon (Tizard et al 1976, p.116). For children under four there are part-time play-groups set up by middle class mothers and often supported financially by local authorities (Austin 1976, p.310). As in Britain, the parent-managed play-group movement spread rapidly and widely from the late 1960s onwards (Tizard et al 1976, p.116). There are some pressures to lower the age of entry to nursery schools to three (Austin 1976, pp.306-307). There are also centres known as kindercentra run by the WKN organisation (full title: The Working Unit of Childcare Centres in Holland) which consists of the combined

resources of day care centres and play-groups (Tizard et al 1976, p.116; Singer 1977, para.17). Some of these provide full day care as well as part-time programs but the number of working mothers in the Netherlands has been relatively low by comparison with other Western European countries (Tizard et al 1976, p.116) although this may be changing. Some municipalities, at parents' expense, are providing untrained 'custodians' in conjunction with nursery schools who cover before school, lunchtime and after-school care (CERI 1977, p.24). In general, child care workers' salaries and status are low by comparison with nursery teachers (Singer 1977, para.43). The nursery schools are characterised by a high degree of organisation and professionalism (Singer 1977, para.49). By contrast with play-groups, parent participation is low (CERI 1977, p.29). Groups are large, about 29 children to a group, in an average school of 60 to 90 children and teachers do not usually have full-time assistants (CERI 1977, pp.23-24).

3.29 Students may gain entry to one of the 48 training colleges for nursery school teachers after 4 years' secondary education. Five years' secondary education is required for entry to primary teacher training colleges and this presumably accounts for the fact that nursery teachers' salaries are lower than those of primary teachers. Courses are of 3 years' duration and include 800 hours of nursery teaching practice. To become a head teacher further study in evening courses is required (CERI 1977, p.23). Recently, some concern has been expressed about easing the transition between nursery and primary school and a discussion memorandum published by the government in 1975 recommended "the elimination of the distinction between nursery school and primary school, doing away with the subject matter/age/class system and developing teaching methods more geared to individual abilities and experience" resulting in a new form of primary school for children from 4 to 12 years of age (Contours of a future education system in the Netherlands 1975, pp.6-7).

New Zealand

3.30 The year 1971 saw the publication of the Hill Report into Pre-school Education and its recommendations have guided policies

since then (CERI 1977, p.36). The task of the Hill Committee of Inquiry was to "indicate principles and priorities for the further development of pre-school education". Its recommendations included the following: "that ... pre-school services should be expanded until they are ultimately available to all who wish them". The Report also recommended that parent involvement be continued, that attendance continue to be voluntary but that efforts be made to alert parents to the value of early childhood education and that pre-schools be established in areas of special need and particular attention be paid to certain categories of children e.g. isolated and handicapped children (Hill 1971, pp.102-105). Both major political parties favour the expansion of pre-school services (CERI 1977, p.36). The expansion since 1965 has been substantial. In July 1965, 20 per cent of 3 and 4-year-olds attended a kindergarten or playcentre. By July 1978 pre-school education services had extended to cover 83 per cent of all 4-year-olds and 65 per cent of 3 and 4-year-olds (Renwick 1979, pp.5-6). There is a variety of pre-school services, two of the main ones being free kindergartens and play centres, provided mainly by two national voluntary organisations which receive State support (CERI 1977, p.20; New Zealand Official Yearbook 1977, p.185).

3.31 Recognised Free Kindergartens. These cater for children aged 3 (2½ in special cases) to 5 and are sessional, with a three-hour morning session and a 2½-hour afternoon session five days a week. (Five is the usual school entry age, although compulsory school age is in fact 6.) Recognised free kindergartens are administered by the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union and receive State support for, among other things, teachers' training and salaries. Teachers undergo two years' full-time study in a teachers college. All sites are provided without cost to the association and in areas designated as being in special need, sites, buildings and approved initial equipment are fully State provided. Mothers are expected to participate in sessions as 'mother helpers' and parents make regular voluntary contributions as well as being involved in all aspects of administration. At 1 July 1977 the kindergartens catered for 33,556 children. The pupil/teacher ratio is generally 40:2. Programs are designed to promote learning through play and include language development activities for future

reading and mathematics. Policy matters are negotiated between the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union, which represents 67 Associations throughout the country, and the Department of Education (Department of Education 1977, p.1).

3.32 Recognised Play Centres (or Play-Groups). These take children from 2½ (or sometimes even younger) to 5 and generally run 2½ to 3-hour sessions several times a week. Supervisors, usually parents, are trained from within the movement in part-time courses. The State assists with the cost of buildings and initial equipment and the training of supervisors. The minimum staffing requirements are one supervisor, one assistant supervisor and two mother helpers to 30 children. Parent education is stressed and a pre-school advisory service is available. Parents pay fees, raise funds and are involved in the centres' upkeep. At 1 July 1977, 704 centres were catering for 23,266 children. The organising body which negotiates with the Department of Education is the New Zealand Playcentre Federation (Department of Education 1977, p.1).

3.33 Other educational services, less widespread than the preceding two include pre-school classes in primary schools, correspondence school, special classes for educationally handicapped children at free kindergartens and play centres, special schools and special care centres for seriously handicapped 3 to 5-year-olds and pre-school classes in Department of Social Welfare institutions. The State pays the salaries for 18 community pre-school workers who assist family play-groups and encourage communities to develop other pre-school education services as appropriate. Some private kindergartens have full day sessions and there are also private day nurseries and non-profit making full day care centres run by voluntary welfare organisations or local authorities (Department of Education 1977, pp.2-4). The question has arisen concerning the administration of early childhood care and education services. A working group has been looking at this question and its report is expected to be available soon (Renwick 1979, p.8).

Norway

3.34 Nursery schools with part-time programs are provided for 3 to 6-year-olds and some 6-year-olds attend 'school readiness' classes in primary school (compulsory school age is 7 years). There are also day care centres for children over 3 and others for children under 3. The level of nursery school provision is low, catering in 1972 for only 5 per cent of children under school age (Tizard et al 1976, p.118). It has been observed that the limited nature of the provision is due, at least in part, to the very low ratio of children to staff (CERI 1975, p.14). The Government acknowledges that there is a great shortage of facilities and it is planned to expand the number of pre-school facilities giving priority to children of working mothers, lone parents and children with 'low level cultural background' (Tizard et al 1976, p.118).

3.35 Nursery schools, which are not considered part of the education system, may be run by municipalities, private bodies and business firms, usually with support from municipal authorities and the State (The Norwegian Education System 1977, p.2). In 1975 legislation initiated by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration was passed in Parliament. Called the Act on Kindergartens, it concerns the administration of nursery schools and supervised play-grounds by local government authorities (Kindergartens in Norway 1977, pp.33-34). It may be noted that, although the Act provides that the principal and persons in charge of a nursery school should be trained pre-school teachers (or their equivalent), the Ministry may grant dispensation from the training requirements (Kindergartens in Norway 1977, p.3). A local authority Committee is responsible for administering the Act and it is for the Local Council to decide under which local authority department the Committee should be for administrative purposes. This means there is a choice between the Social Welfare Committee, the Education Committee and an ad hoc Committee for Kindergartens. In country districts the Education Committee is seen as a likely choice as the expansion of kindergartens will be considered in connection with schools (Kindergartens in Norway 1977, p.36). The Committee's duties include cooperation with the relevant authorities whose activities have a bearing on nursery

schools and supervised playgrounds. These are the Education Department, the Social Welfare Department, the Child Welfare Committee and the Department of Public Heal . Thus some attempt is being made at local authority level to coordinate various services pertaining to young children. Parents and staff are represented on management committees of local authority nursery schools (Kindergartens in Norway 1977, pp.8-9). An official publication explaining the Act states in respect of possible conflicts e.g. over opening hours: "Should considerations for the welfare of the children clash with other social considerations, children and their needs shall have priority" (Kindergartens in Norway 1977, p.34). Also "the Act on Kindergartens firmly connects the conception of kindergarten to an educationally orientated facility, and not to an institution" (p.35). Measures are being taken within local authority areas to improve contact between kindergartens and authorised child-minders (Kindergartens in Norway 1977, p.36).

3.36 Government grants are designed to cover an average of 30 per cent of operating costs and loans are available for buildings. A Kindergarten Adviser has been appointed for each province (Kindergartens in Norway 1977, pp.37-38). Referring to the longstanding debate in Norway about whether kindergartens should be under the Education or Social Welfare Ministry, the publication states that they should now be seen in the context of family policy and therefore linked with other measures to benefit families with young children (Kindergartens in Norway 1977, p.38). (The Act on Kindergartens is regarded as a direct outcome of the 'White Book on the Living Conditions of Families with Young Children' which also proposed shorter working hours for parents of young children, and provisions for parents to take leave to care for sick children, among other recommendations.)

3.37 A target has been set of providing 100,000 places by the end of 1981 (there were 40,000 in 1976). The number of pre-school teachers-in-training has increased fivefold over the last few years resulting in fewer appointments of untrained staff (Kindergartens in Norway 1977, p.38). Teacher education courses are of 2 or 3 years'

duration although it appears that the 2 year course is now being phased out (Laerarutdanning 1979-80, pp.21-22). The Act provides that kindergartens should be staffed on the basis of one trained pre-school teacher to 16 children (where all children are 3 or over and opening hours exceed 6). For authorised child-minding the ratio is one trained pre-school teacher for 30 children. In family day care the maximum number of pre-school children permitted, including the minder's own, is 4 (Kindergartens in Norway 1977, p.16).

Sweden

3.38 In 1968 a Commission on Child Centres considered the form and content of pre-school facilities and made recommendations for their expansion. The Commission took the view that pre-schools complemented family life and that all facilities, day nurseries and nursery schools alike, should be regarded as pre-school centres with all staff having educational duties, the only differences being opening hours and ages of children. Coordinated administrative arrangements were therefore proposed as it was thought undesirable to split services between social services and education authorities (Tizard et al 1976, p.119). In 1973 the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) passed the Pre-school Act. In 1976 this act was amended to become the Child Care Act which came into effect on 1 January 1977. The legislation guarantees at least one year of pre-school education for all children before entering school at the age of seven. Municipal authorities now have a duty to provide children's services of all kinds, including day nurseries, leisure time centres and family day care. Day nurseries open from 6.30 am to 6.30 pm Monday to Friday and half day on Saturday. As well as catering for children of working or studying parents they provide places for children in need of special care for a variety of reasons. Nursery schools are often in the same building as day nurseries and cater mainly for five and six-year-olds. A pre-school teacher leads one group of up to 20 children in the morning and another such group in the afternoon. Leisure time centres may also be under the same roof as day nurseries and/or nursery schools or located in schools or community recreational facilities. The centres cater for the youngest school children. There are also play-groups run by churches and other organisations aimed at children between three and five years (Thorsell 1977, pp.2-3).

3.39 The Child Care Act provides that children with physical, mental, social or linguistic handicaps should participate in pre-school activities before they turn six. Also provision is made in order that children in hospitals, orphanages or other institutions should have access to pre-school type programs (Thorsell 1977, p.3).

3.40 Following the recommendations of the 1968 Commission, pre-school education is not considered part of the education system, coming as it does under the local government Central Board for Social Welfare Services and, nationally, under the National Board of Health and Welfare. Pre-school education is seen in the context of a family policy which supports children and their parents. Pre-school education tends to be decentralised to municipal level unlike primary and secondary education, as it is seen as more suited to the local authority structure which is geared to meet local needs (Thorsell 1977, pp.3-4).

3.41 At the same time, at the national level, there is cooperation between the National Board of Health and Welfare and the National Board of Education and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, personnel organisations and others, all of which are represented on what is known as The Pre-School Delegation (Thorsell 1977, p.5).

3.42 The principles enunciated by Froebel have had a continuing influence on Swedish pre-school programs as do the theories of Erikson and Piaget. Emphasis is placed on encouraging children to cooperate with one another and at the same time to develop as independent individuals (Thorsell 1977, p.7; Schyl-Bjurman 1977, p.2). There have been positive results in experiments at day nurseries with forming 'sibling groupings' (Thorsell 1977, p.8). Children whose ages range from 7 months to 7 years and sometimes including young school children mingle together rather than, as previously, being separated into several groups acording to age (Schyl-Bjurman 1977, p.6).

3.43 Some measures are being taken to cater for the special needs of immigrant children. Official policy as from 1 July 1977 is that all immigrant children have the right to instruction in their own language. It is hoped they will thus consolidate their competence in their first language and ultimately achieve true bilingualism. Teachers who speak the languages of the immigrant groups are being trained but the program is still in its early stages and only a small number of children are involved so far (Schyl-Bjurman 1977, p.7).

3.44 A recent development are open pre-schools which have sprung up since 1972. These pre-schools are intended mainly for parents and various forms of child-minders who may meet together with their children. Open pre-schools are often headed by a pre-school teacher who acts as a resource person and provides guidance on activities for young children (Schyl-Bjurman 1977, p.5). Social workers and other staff may also be present to offer advice (Thorsell 1977, p.2). Programs are flexible in response to community demand and may include reading stories, films, puppet theatres etc. (Schyl-Bjurman 1977, p.5). People may not leave children there: a parent or another adult must remain with each child (Thorsell 1977, p.2). No charge is made for attendance. Open pre-schools are usually located near the local child welfare centre, the social service centre and the family advice centre to facilitate access to a variety of services which support the family (Schyl-Bjurman 1977, p.5).

3.45 It is recognised that traditionally nursery schooling has had low status and nursery schools have been staffed solely by women. In fact teaching method was not included in training programs and pre-school staff were not, therefore, regarded as genuine teachers (Schyl-Bjurman 1977, p.8). The situation is changing and men are entering the profession, so far in small numbers (Austin 1976, p.160; Schyl-Bjurman 1977, p.8). Teacher training consists of a two-year course at teachers college and nursery school. Applicants (generally aged 19 years) must have completed nine years' comprehensive school and have six months' practical experience (Austin 1976, pp.158-159).

3.46 There is a conscious aim to ease as far as possible the transition between pre-school and compulsory schooling. In each municipality a joint local working group is established to plan a program for this purpose. With their teacher pre-school children visit the school they will be attending. Joint in-service training and study days are arranged for pre-school and lower level primary teachers. These teachers also meet at student welfare conferences and the same doctors and psychologists serve both pre-school and lower primary. School buildings in many municipalities house both pre-school and primary school. Therefore if certain primary age children are not thought ready for full-day primary school, they may spend part of their day at the pre-school (Stenholm 1976, pp.3-4).

United Kingdom

3.47 By comparison with other European countries the provision of nursery education in the U.K. is at a low level, a fact which was remarked upon in the 1972 White Paper on education (Department of Education and Science 1972, para.15). This is in part attributable to economic difficulties experienced in the U.K. following World War II resulting in non-compulsory schooling being accorded a low priority for funding purposes. In effect virtually no funds were made available to expand nursery facilities for the post war period up to the mid 1960s when in 1964 and 1965 permission was given to establish new nursery classes which would release mothers to return to teaching (Pringle & Naidoo 1975, p.90). The Plowden Report, Children and their Primary Schools, (1967), recommended a large expansion of nursery education (para.343) and the designation of educational priority areas (para.341), i.e. areas of social and educational deprivation, for special attention. Following this report, some expansion of nursery education did occur. The 1972 White Paper confirmed an emphasis on positive discrimination (Department of Education and Science 1972, para.28).

3.48 Compulsory schooling commences at age 5 (Austin 1976, p.78). Despite the deliberate non-expansion of pre-school facilities, parents evidently desired some form of pre-school experience for their children and the rapid growth of the play-group movement (Pringle &

Naidoo 1975, p.99), originally begun as a self-help exercise, testifies to this. Since the movement began in the 1960s a considerable number of children have attended play-groups run by parents and voluntary organisations or charitable bodies (Schools in Britain 1978, p.10). Play-groups are the responsibility of local health authorities unlike nursery schools or classes which are considered part of the education system (Austin 1976, pp.90-91). In January 1976 179,000 children under five were attending maintained nursery schools and classes under the auspices of the Department of Education and Science, 130,000 part-time and 49,000 full-time. Half day attendance has been encouraged. There is a small number of independent nursery schools. For working parents of pre-school age children, local authority social services departments and voluntary bodies run 600 day nurseries which are open during working hours and there are 30,500 registered child-minders (Schools in Britain 1978, p.9). The number of unregistered and therefore illegal child-minders almost certainly exceeds this but, because they are acknowledged as fulfilling a genuine need for working parents, there have been no prosecutions in recent years. It is estimated that about 100,000 children are being cared for by known child minders and a further 150,000 by unknown minders. Unregistered minders are more common in less prosperous areas. Because of the large numbers involved, some people in the child development field, notably Brian Jackson, Director of the National Education Research and Development Trust, are pointing out that the educational needs of these children should be considered, especially as many come from disadvantaged backgrounds. (Jackson alleges that this group has been neglected because of prejudice against working parents in the upper reaches of the Civil Service.) Such children may, or may not be given an opportunity to take advantage of existing provisions. Minders without cars who are responsible for several children of pre-school age may simply consider the journey to and from a facility too physically difficult to be worthwhile for only a few hours. The BBC television series entitled Caring for Other People's Children devised by Jackson and Hazel Wigmore, Director of the National Children's Centre, was apparently successful in an attempt to reach child-minders. As well as providing advice about such matters as diet, fees etc. it makes suggestions for

offering children activities which will stimulate them. A handbook (Jackson 1976) was produced to accompany the program (Jackson & Wigmore 1978).

3.49 Between 1974 and 1976, over 40,000,000 pounds sterling were spent by local education authorities on nursery schools and nursery classes attached to primary schools. The Government is committed to making nursery education available to a greater proportion of children under five and a target (first enunciated by the Plowden Committee) has been set for eventually extending the provision to 90 per cent of four-year-olds and 50 per cent of three-year-olds. Most new facilities are taking the form of the more economical nursery class attached to primary schools. It is believed that this type of facility also has benefits in easing children's transition into the school (Schools in Britain 1978, pp.9-10).

3.50 Nursery schools are staffed by a head teacher assisted by other teachers or nursery nurses or nursery assistants. Nursery classes are staffed by trained teachers and assistants. The average pupil/teacher ratio is 10:1 (where part-time pupils count as half) (Schools in Britain 1978, p.10). Certified teachers receive three years training after completing their General Certificate of Education (Austin 1976, p.94). There is at present a careful review of the number of trainee teachers admitted for all courses because of the projected decline in school populations until the 1990s (Schools in Britain 1978, p.10 & p.35). At the same time in-service courses are being developed for teachers who wish to work in nursery schools and courses leading to the nursery assistant qualification, the National Nursery Examination Board certificate, are being expanded (Schools in Britain 1978, p.10).

3.51 Unlike nursery schools and classes, play-groups involve parents to a high degree (although parent participation is not obligatory to the extent it is in New Zealand) and rely heavily on fees and fund raising activities. The Pre-school Playgroups Association (PPA) in England receives an annual government grant and organises courses for parents who may become group leaders and

assistants. Together with PPA, further education colleges and university adult education departments also provide play-group leaders' courses. There are area organisers and local advisers, some supported by local authority grants, who maintain contact with local education departments and schools (Schools in Britain 1978, pp.10-11). Play-groups tend to be utilized mainly by the middle classes (Austin 1976, p.85). Nursery schools and classes programs are still heavily influenced by Froebel's principles of learning through play (Austin 1976, p.99) and, as one would expect, a similar philosophy prevails in play-groups (Schools in Britain 1978, p.10).

3.52 In an effort to coordinate activities in this area, some local authorities have appointed advisers responsible for either play-groups and nursery education or for child-minders and play-groups. Others have officers in charge of the overall development of local pre-school services. In some instances there has been joint planning between the social services and education departments to locate day nurseries or centres and nursery schools or classes close to one another to promote staff cooperation and the transfer of children as appropriate. Sometimes play-groups share school facilities to which child-minders may bring the children in their charge. Several centres combine education and day care (Schools in Britain 1978, p.11). There is increasing interest in home visiting schemes which involve parents in the education of their young children and in parent education. Home Link and Home Start are two examples of the former. Home Link in Liverpool began as a scheme to train mothers to become home visitors (Haydon 1978, p.20). Home visitors were originally supposed to encourage mothers to engage in suitable pre-school educational activities with their children. The scheme appears to have shifted its emphasis somewhat from pre-school education but there have been other developments considered beneficial. Mothers have become more self-confident and, on completing the course, have gone on to organise play-groups or undertake other forms of education e.g. 'O' levels in welfare rights. Communication with the local school has improved. As one worker put it, "a woman who feels real, energetic, hopeful and supported by friends creates a vastly different

environment for her children than a woman who is depressed, isolated, demoralised and alone" (Haydon, 1978 p.21).

3.53 In Leicester, Home Start relies on 66 trained volunteers who are carefully matched with families experiencing problems with pre-school children. Mothers are encouraged to use objects already in the home as toys and are given counselling and assistance of various kinds. Professionals (e.g. the chief nursing officer and the adviser on primary education) are involved as a support group. The underlying assumption is that entrance to nursery school at age 3 is already too late if patterns of deprivation are not to be repeated (Haydon 1978, p.21).

3.54 To take an example of parent education, in October 1977 the Open University presented two short courses for parents: The First Years of Life (covering the period from conception to age two) and The Preschool Child (from second to fifth birthday). They were developed by the Community Education Section of the Post Experience Courses Unit of the Open University together with the Health Education Council and the Preschool Playgroups Association. The courses involve about five hours' study per week for eight weeks and materials include eight full-colour correspondence textbooks, four 25-minute television programs, three 18-minute records, one resource pack of posters, leaflets etc., and four optional computer-marked assignments leading to a Letter of Course Completion. Students may opt to join local self-help study groups (Wolfson 1978, pp.1-3).

3.55 The aim is to help parents in understanding their own and children's needs with a view to enhancing the personal development of both parents and children (Wolfson 1978, p.3). A survey of students enrolled the first time the courses were presented found that over 95 per cent were female and the majority were not working although approximately one third were working either full or part-time. More than half had educational qualifications at post 'O' level, i.e. they were people already highly educated by general community standards (Wolfson 1978, p.9). It is probably fair to say that these are the very same middle-class people who would read literature on child

development and who are likely to make use of community facilities such as play-groups and nursery schools or classes. Consideration is being given to ways of attracting more young parents and those with fewer educational qualifications. It is also being recommended that the materials be adapted for use by teachers in secondary school child development classes (Wolfson 1978, p.10 & p.12).

3.56 One indication of official thinking on future developments in nursery education may be glimpsed in an item appearing in the Times Educational Supplement (Doe 1978, p.5). In an address to the British Association for Early Childhood Education, Mr Norman Thomas, HM Chief Inspector of Primary Education, suggested that nursery teachers should take a wider view of their role and become the "managers and tutors of the other adults who had a part to play in the education of the under fives". The others include parents often enthused by play-group experience and senior pupils from secondary schools undertaking child development courses. Making a plea for close cooperation among those operating services for under-fives he envisioned nursery teachers using their expertise to support local play-groups and child-minders. Nursery teachers could also assist those visiting homes as teacher-social workers or community workers (Doe 1978, p.5). Joyce S. Watt, of the University of Aberdeen, in her study Co-operation in Preschool Education paints a similar future scenario where nursery school teachers become pre-school coordinators linking the community (including play-groups) with the school system. To achieve this she suggests that the preparation of pre-school teachers would need to be modified to include such elements as the sociology of communities, communication skills for dealing with adults as individuals or in groups and practical experience in working with adults and children outside the school (Watt 1977, pp.86-87).

3.57 To sum up, within the limits of resticted funding, various approaches are being tried and there is a growing concern in the United Kingdom to coordinate resources, both human and physical, for optimal effect.

United States

3.58 There is no overriding national policy on nursery schools in the United States and the diversity of provision reflects this. In the 1920s and 1930s experimental nursery schools attached to university psychology departments or teachers colleges aroused interest in early childhood education (Robinson et al 1972, p.483). Some parent cooperative centres were established at that time which catered for affluent children as did those set up following a revival of interest in Montessori's methods in the 1960s (Robinson et al 1972, p.483; Evans 1975, p.255). Today some centres are commercially operated, some are sponsored by churches and charitable organisations and some are parent run on a cooperative basis. There are no official national standards but there is a generally accepted norm of up to fifteen 3-year-olds or twenty 4-year-olds for each trained teacher or assistant. The types of pre-school program vary enormously from the elaborate where trained adults may outnumber children to essentially backyard operations where untrained persons offer primarily custodial care. Most centres run for 2 to 3 hours, 2 to 5 mornings a week with some afternoon sessions. They generally cater for children aged 3 to 5 years as entry to kindergarten at age 5 is now the general rule in most States and communities. Sometimes limited State funding is available (Robinson et al 1972, pp.484-485).

3.59 There are still relatively few teacher education courses specifically for teachers of young children (Simons 1977, introduction). Often preparation consists of a four year liberal arts degree which may include some education and some early childhood education courses and a practicum. Commonly the degree is followed by "certification" if certain requirements are met. There are only very few colleges specialising in early childhood education courses. They include the well known graduate Bank Street College in New York (Simons 1977, section 3.1). Teachers in day care centres are usually paid less than elementary (primary) school teachers (Simons 1977, section 2.1.4).

3.60 The best known program to come out of the United States is Project Head Start which, with several related programs, has been

subjected to considerable scrutiny and evaluation. The results of research into the outcomes of the program are discussed elsewhere. In the early 1960s the U.S. Government committed itself to a "war on poverty" thus providing a favourable climate for the introduction of a project such as Head Start which aims to help poor children overcome disadvantages in school through providing appropriate learning experiences at the pre-school level (Austin 1976, p.340). It was hoped that these experiences would play a role in breaking the cycle of poverty (Steiner 1976, p.27). The Office of Economic Opportunity provided funds that enabled 561,359 children to be enrolled in 11,068 centres in the summer of 1965 (Steiner 1976, p.30). The program was and is still designed to provide comprehensive services of which education is one. Others are health, including dental and mental health, nutrition, parent involvement and social services (Austin 1976, p.341). By 1969 doubts were being expressed about its effects on cognitive development. These doubts seemed confirmed by the appearance of an evaluation study carried out by The Westinghouse Learning Corporation and Ohio University (Cicirelli et al 1969).

3.61 In an attempt to build on Head Start, Congress in 1967 had passed legislation introducing the "Follow Through Program". This was designed to extend the benefits obtained by Head Start children into kindergarten and early primary school. Like Head Start, it concentrated on several aspects of children's development, such as health, welfare and nutrition as well as education (Evans 1975, p.14). Despite attempts such as these to ensure that Head Start results did not "wash out" as critics alleged, the Westinghouse Report made a considerable impact. Former Counsellor to President Nixon, Daniel P. Moynihan, has described (Steiner 1976, p.32) how in 1969 a Presidential message giving strong support to Head Start was modified when the results of the Westinghouse study became known. It seemed to show, in Moynihan's words, that "the children were getting their teeth fixed, but little else than that could be quantified" with the result that the President's message described Head Start as still "experimental" and gave a broad hint: "not every experiment succeeds". Since that time various experts have pointed to flaws in the Westinghouse Study on grounds of methodology, but it nevertheless

served to dampen some of the earlier enthusiasm for compensatory programs and planning for new programs slowed down. No doubt expectations were unrealistically high. One commentator (Austin 1976, p.5) has, with hindsight, passed the following judgement:

> "Most early Head Start centres were varied, hastily assembled adaptations of the child-centred nursery schools designed for attendance by middle-class American children. Few designed any special curricula to provide an enriching set of experiences for children of the poor".

Programs were initially of short duration (summer only) and staff were largely untrained (Little & Smith 1971, p.50).

3.62 Another program, Home Start, was implemented by the Office of Child Development which assumed responsibility for Head Start and associated programs. It sought to help disadvantaged parents with their children in the expectation that the influence of the home should be deeper and more lasting than a centre-based program of a few hours a week. Sixteen initial Home Start projects reached between 1,000 and 2,000 children. The home visitors who serve 8 to 20 families, work with one focal parent, almost always the mother. The visitor is expected to make suggestions on how to provide learning experiences for the child and encourage language and social and emotional development. In addition, she is supposed to put parents in touch with various services relating to health, welfare etc. The guidelines for Home Start visitors have been criticised as being full of well intentioned rhetoric but lacking in specific details on how to achieve the stated objectives (Steiner 1976, pp.79-82). The program's multiplicity of aims makes it difficult to assess its value and effectiveness. Despite initial hopes that Home Start's effects would be more lasting, evaluations to date suggest that Home Start faces similar problems to Head Start. That is, benefits do occur but are difficult to sustain without a more thoroughgoing type of intervention into the underlying causes of social and economic disadvantage (Steiner 1976, pp.83-84). Steiner quotes a Home Start director's naive call at a conference that home visitors should "help have-nots

be happy" and assesses the program in the following terms: "more exhortation than substance, more goodwill than good sense" (Steiner 1976, p.85). In 1977 288 grantees were operating a Home Start option as part of Head Start, serving over 12,000 children; there were six Home Start training centres. Other Head Start projects include Project Developmental Continuity in thirteen communities where Head Start workers, schools and parents aim at maintaining a continuity in children's development from Head Start to third grade, Bilingual/Bicultural projects for Spanish-speaking children, and the testing of Education for Parenthood training materials used by Head Start parents (Martinez 1977, pp.329-330). In the early 1970s and up to the present, Head Start has continued serving approximately 349,000 children and their families each year (Martinez 1977, p.322).

3.63 There has been some interest expressed by the American Federation of Teachers in developing a national system of early childhood education linked into public schools. It has been suggested that this interest is motivated at least in part by the prospect of high rates of unemployment among teachers exacerbated by a falling birth rate. Some lobbyists for day care, including labour unions, have been considering this concept as a possible means of obtaining universal day care with some control over quality (Joffe 1977, p.xi & pp.140-142). Such a scheme remains a hope for the distant future and any action is probably dependent on the various organisations involved agreeing among themselves sufficiently to form an effective pressure group.

3.64 Proponents of Head Start are currently pointing to its apparent success as a community action program which has involved previously powerless people in political activity, increased social awareness, stimulated parental involvement in education and given opportunities for upward social mobility (Zigler 1976, p.4). Also, spurred on by criticism, educationalists are continuing to experiment with different types of curricula and materials. Most children are enrolled now in one-year programs; there are about 12,000 of these against only 200 summer programs (Martinez 1977, p.322) as research

has indicated that the latter are less effective in producing gains in cognitive development (Evans 1975, p.68). In Home Start emphasis is being placed on under 3s and their parents and increasingly parents are participating in decision-making, including the hiring of staff and shaping of curriculum. People who have worked in a pre-school program have been able to apply to become Child Development Associates (CDAs). The CDA program was a further spinoff from Head Start and was largely designed to produce qualified staff at lower cost. CDA training has been individually based, taking into account individual knowledge, experience and skills. Training has generally been for two or more years but much less has been allowable for exceptionally able people. A consortium board of professional organisations agreed to an assessment scheme involving the CDA candidate, the candidate's trainer, a special community representative and a professional evaluator. The scheme has been judged to lack promise and questions have been raised about career structure, recognition from various states and job availability (Steiner 1976, pp.61-74).

3.65 Simultaneously throughout the United States, apart from the larger scale federally funded programs, numerous projects are being carried out, some oriented to parent education, some aimed at specific groups such as minority or handicapped children (Simons 1977, section 1.6; Martinez 1977; Little & Smith 1971). Some integrated facilities may provide under the one roof some or all of the following services: day care, sessional pre-school, special education, family day care and out-of-school care (Simons 1977, section 1.5). The general impression is one of continuing enthusiasm and the desire for experimentation in early childhood education but with perhaps more realistic expectations than prevailed in 1965.

III DISCUSSION

Setting Priorities

3.66 Some, but not all, countries identify certain categories of children deserving priority for entry to programs. These categories include children of lone parents, intact families where the

mother works (in these two instances a day care provision may be included alongside the educational program), children from ethnic minorities, the socially and/or economically disadvantaged, abused or neglected children and those with physical and/or mental handicaps. At least one writer (Jack Tizard et al 1976, p.188) has pointed to the implicit dangers in providing a selective service as a means of lessening costs. First, a case can be made that pre-school education is beneficial to all children and to discriminate between groups of children would be unjust. Second, a service directed towards the poor tends to become a poor service.

3.67 If pre-school education is not made both universal and compulsory it is very likely that a proportion of the neediest children will continue to miss out, unless special measures are taken to accommodate them. But as noted above, there are arguments against schemes which discriminate among children and the dangers of stigmatising children are real.

Structuring Children's Early Experiences

3.68 Experts in child development appear to have had difficulty in clarifying the objectives of early childhood education beyond generalised abstract statements and this lack of clarity is likely to be reflected in teacher education institutions. There is to date little solid information available to offer guidance to educators on how to structure children's early experiences for maximum effect (White & Watts 1973, p.7; White 1971, p.131). There is continuing debate between those who believe that pre-school programs should be highly structured and directed principally towards fostering cognitive development and 'traditionalists' who prefer less structured programs based on Froebellian style 'free play' which emphasise social and emotional development. Even those who advocate a compromise aimed at developing the 'whole child' socially, emotionally and intellectually are hard pressed to identify in concrete terms the characteristics of programs which will achieve the desired results. Although cognitive development can be measured, current measurement techniques are far from perfect. On the other hand, social and emotional qualities do not lend themselves as readily to objective measurement.

Accountability

3.69 Because of the difficulties posed by testing etc., pre-school teachers may experience problems in demonstrating the effectiveness of their work. While it is possible to gauge whether an education system at primary and secondary levels is succeeding in producing citizens who are literate and numerate, it is no simple task to ascertain whether a pre-school program is succeeding or failing or even producing any effect at all. There has been an implicit assumption by supporters of early childhood education that the pre-school years are of critical importance for children's subsequent development. They believe that harm or deprivation of any kind experienced in the early years has a lifelong effect and cannot easily be overcome. (This line of thinking is more noticeably prevalent in English-speaking countries where Bowlby's work has had some influence.) As a corollary to this, any measures taken to enhance development or compensate for disadvantage in the pre-school years should be of lasting benefit. These assumptions are now under question (e.g. see Clarke & Clarke 1976) and only carefully controlled longitudinal studies will shed any light on the matter. In the meantime, teachers and teacher educators are left to grapple with the current theory, no matter how unsatisfactory, and must attempt to translate it into practice.

Benefits of Pre-school

3.70 Despite the ambiguities of research results it is self-evident to teachers in the field and parents alike that children do gain real benefits from pre-school. They enjoy the activities offered and learn how to function in a group of children their own age outside the family. Also pre-school may be seen as a means of providing support and relief to the smaller, often socially isolated nuclear family by giving mothers in particular some respite from the constant demands of the active and, in many cases, lonely pre-school child.

Administration

3.71 Most countries acknowledge that, if piecemeal strategies are to be avoided coordination is necessary although bureaucratic and

professional rivalries and entrenched interests can make this difficult to achieve. Education authorities may fear that their welfare counterparts do not give due importance to ensuring that children say, in day care, obtain access to educational programs. For their part, welfare authorities may see educationalists as too preoccupied with the child in isolation from his or her family situation. Teachers may understandably seek to avoid becoming involved with problem families and consider that they have no responsibilities towards those children, often the most needy, who cannot even attend sessional pre-schools either because their parents work or for other reasons. When under one roof, say in a day care facility, relationships among different types of professionals (e.g. nurses in charge of infants and pre-school teachers with older children) may be uneasy in terms of salary relativities and status (Tizard 1977, para.60). There are other inherent tensions among workers in the pre-school area. Joyce S. Watt (1977), in her study conducted in Fife, Scotland, found that social and community workers had rather limited and stereotyped views of the role of the nursery school teacher. Such workers had high regard for voluntary play-groups which they saw as encouraging self-help in the community. On the other hand, some nursery teachers were dubious about the worth of play-groups on the grounds that those leading them lacked professional expertise.

3.72 There is no suggestion that all women and their children need or even want early childhood services of <u>all</u> kinds, but it seems obvious that <u>most</u> could benefit from some provision or other. Governments have still to ascertain what mix of services best meets actual human needs. Welfare or health oriented provisions run the risk of over-looking educational aspects. Facilities charged solely with providing an educational service will prove less effective if children's health and welfare requirements are not known and catered for. The educational needs of children in day care (whether in private homes or centre-based) should not be ignored. All children should have access to educational programs, not only those whose care-givers are well informed enough and have the means and leisure to transport children to and from such facilities as exist. It is

apparent that most countries are perforce having to consider an integrated approach to early childhood services, one aspect of which cannot be realistically considered in isolation from the others. Despite bureaucratic and professional rivalries and divisions the needs of young children should be paramount and only coordinated policy-making will suffice. A final quotation from Tizard's OECD paper (1977, para.81) summarises the issues countries will need to face in the next few years:

> "Today's services are not simply inadequate in quantity; they are also fragmented and unresponsive to changing needs. One of the few benefits of the present bleak economic climate is that it may offer a chance to review existing policies, experiment with new options and work out better policies not just for pre-school services but for families with young children also".

Parent Involvement

3.73 It is probably somewhat early to judge the results of programs in parent involvement and parent education but Barbara Tizard (1975, p.21) has observed that "much of the thinking about parent education is both psychologically and sociologically simplistic", a thought echoed by Steiner in his assessment of Home Start. Tizard (1975, p.52) cites several research workers' misgivings that home visiting schemes if handled insensitively, could be seen by mothers as an intrusion of privacy and as implicit criticism of their child rearing practices. This could have consequences for the relationship between mother and child undermining rather than promoting mothers' confidence and ultimately affecting children's development. On the other hand, organised discussion groups outside the home may not attract certain individuals (the timid, the depressed, the poorly educated low in self esteem) who might profit from them. In the U.K. we saw that of two television programs, the Open University course catered largely for the well educated but Brian Jackson's more popularly oriented program appears to have reached a wider audience. Evidently much more thought needs to be given to clarifying what is meant by "parent involvement" and to devising suitable parent

education programs for a range of people of different socio-economic levels.

Implications for Early Childhood Services of Women's Changing Role

3.74 The current decade has seen a considerable growth in labour force participation by women, many of them married. Most of these women are responsible for children of whom a considerable number are under school age. In fact, a recent OECD paper has concluded that in spite of the shortage of child care facilities, especially for young children, the number of mothers of pre-school age children who remain in employment has continued to increase rapidly (Working Party on the Role of Women in the Economy 1979, pp.158-159). Most countries do acknowledge that there is a need for day care for pre-school age children and most governments make some provision for it but nowhere is it claimed that the provision goes anywhere near towards meeting the need. In all industrialised countries day care privately arranged between parent and minder is a common phenomenon. Such day care is not subjected to any official supervision and is frequently unstable, facts which are a cause for concern. We are, of course, not only talking about two income families. It must be remembered that, largely because of rising divorce rates, there is a growing number of lone parent families and while most such families are headed by women, there is an increasing number of lone parent families headed by men.

3.75 Dr Jack Tizard, Director of the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the University of London, noted in a paper for the OECD that, although Britain like most countries favours half-day services for pre-schoolers, survey results indicate that for three and four-year-olds full school day services are desired as often by parents as half-day services. He states that, "A consequence is that there are empty places in some nursery schools in spite of unmet demands - because the hours don't suit parents." He concludes, "The two greatest expressed but unmet needs appear to be for full day care (for perhaps one quarter of all children after their first birthday and for one sixth of all infants), and for the equivalent of a full school day early childhood care and education for children over the age of one" (Tizard 1977, para.47).

3.76 The results of this survey suggest that if some countries were to continue to expand existing types of services for early childhood education without canvassing actual parental needs and preferences, inappropriate types of facilities could be provided (Tizard 1977, para.42). It has been observed that in the countries being considered here, the current economic recession has not led to a fall in the proportion of women with young children who are gainfully employed outside the home. To take one example, in the U.S. the proportion of women (with children under three years) in employment rose from 27 per cent in 1970 to 35 per cent in 1976 and most of these were working full-time (Tizard 1977, p.33). The era in which most present day politicians and senior decision-makers in government attained adulthood and entered married life was one when virtually the only mothers in the workforce were the very poor who worked out of economic necessity. (A minute number of professional and business women were exceptions.) This situation has changed and middle-class mothers are remaining in the labour force. It appears that their reasons are not solely economic. To quote Tizard once more:

> "The desire of increasing numbers of mothers of young children to return to work is in part, but only in part, due to a desire to earn money. Our surveys suggest that professional and social factors - desire for company, for independence, for a more varied way of life - are equally important" (Tizard 1977, para.50).

3.77 The articulate middle-class, which traditionally values education, first pressured governments to provide pre-school education in the post war years (and where, as in Britain, official help was not forthcoming, organised play-groups). If middle-class lifestyles are changing and middle-class mothers are now adding to demands for day care this has significance for future planning in pre-school education. Presumably the middle-classes do not place any less value on educational programs than before; rather, they may be expected to demand that day care programs contain a solid educational component.

3.78 Several recent studies mentioned in All Our Children (see Tizard et al 1976, pages 152 and following) are relevant. One (Oakley 1974a, 1974b) which took a sample of women with children under five found that 70 per cent of the middle-class group and an identical percentage of the working-class group, were dissatisifed or very dissatisfied with their work as housewives. These women "had a deep-seated high appreciation of the rewards experienced in outside work, the resultant comparison with housework (branding) it as a less enjoyed and less enjoyable occupation" (Tizard et al 1976, p.157). There is some evidence (Brown et al 1975) to suggest that employment helps to increase the resistance of mothers to the onset of depressive moods (Tizard et al 1976, p.156). Research evidence (Brown et al 1975; Richman, 1974) has indicated that the rate of psychiatric disorders among mothers of young children is disturbingly high (Tizard et al 1976, p.153). If, as suggested, employment helps relieve depression then this is probably being realised by women themselves who are, in effect, "voting with their feet". While a mother's job is obviously not a social panacea, for some families it may well lead to an improvement in the quality of their emotional lives, as well as their economic status. Indeed, one U.S. researcher (Nye & Hoffman 1963) found that employed mothers over a large sample had a more favourable attitude towards children and motherhood (provided they had no more than three children) (Tizard et al 1976, p.155). Thus what governments may spend on the care and education of young children may be offset by reduced health and other costs and the creation of a happier environment for children. It is evident that a depressed and anxious mother cannot hope to provide a stimulating and beneficial environment for her child. Such a child undoubtedly suffers intellectually, emotionally and, in extreme cases, physically.

IV SUMMARY

3.79 The age of entry to primary school varies among countries, from five to seven years, and this has a bearing on policies. Those with a higher age of school entry may appear to have a wider provision of pre-school facilities, whereas those where entry

is earlier may not. In most, if not all countries, the average five or six-year-old is probably considered ready for some form of specifically educational experience. Thus in Sweden where school entry is at age seven, there is a firm government commitment to extending the provision for pre-school children, and in particular for the five and six year age group. By contrast, in the United Kingdom with school entry at age five, the commitment to extending it through public funding is less marked.

3.80 There are considerable differences in the percentages of children in different age-groups attending pre-school in various countries. There is extensive coverage in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and New Zealand. In Belgium over 90 per cent of children aged 3 to 5 years attend free nursery schools. In France about 70 per cent of 3-year-olds attend ecoles maternelles, 93 per cent of 4-years-olds and 96 per cent of 5-years-olds. In the Netherlands in 1973, 88 per cent of 4-year-olds and 96 per cent of 5-year-olds attended nursery schools. In New Zealand in 1978 83 per cent of 4-year-olds and 65 per cent of 3 and 4-years-olds attended kindergartens and playcentres. In contrast, Denmark had about 27 per cent of 3 to 6-year-olds in nursery schools in 1976. Somewhere in between are the Federal Republic of Germany (44 per cent of 3 to 5-year-olds in nursery schools in 1973) and Italy (about 60 per cent of 3 to 6-year-olds in pre-schools). Hours of opening also vary: Belgium 8.30 am to 4.15 pm or later; France 7 am to 7 pm, education activities 8.30 am to 5 pm, open all Saturday; Swedish day nurseries 6.30 am to 6.30 pm Monday - Friday and half day Saturday. Closer to Australia are the Netherlands with 3 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon in nursery schools; New Zealand - kindergartens with 3 hours in the morning and 2½ hours in the afternoon, 5 days a week; in the U.S. most nursery school centres open for 2-3 hours, 2-5 mornings a week with some afternoon sessions.

3.81 Most of the countries discussed have committed themselves to quite extensive pre-school education programs in response to public demand. Usually, education-oriented programs consist of one to two years before formal schooling and are principally aimed at children of

three to five (or six) years of age. Younger children tend to be seen as needing principally custodial care and administrative responsibilities may reflect this view. At a time of economic recession there is concern about the high cost of trained staff and physical facilities, especially if pupil/teacher ratios are to be kept relatively low ('low' in this context means few children per teacher). Some countries identify certain categories of children deserving priority for entry to programs.

3.82 While the trend has been for pre-school teachers to receive three years of training at a tertiary institution following completion of secondary education there are variations in the requirements for teacher preparation. Canada's requirements have usually been one to two years training after high school graduation while France has required two years training after baccalaureat. In the Netherlands teacher training is for three years after five years of secondary education. In Italy a teacher chooses her profession at the age of 14. This suggests a lack of consensus among countries as to the necessary amount and level of training. Pre-school teachers in some countries are less well-paid than other teachers. This may be because formal requirements for entry to pre-school teacher education courses are lower or courses may be of shorter duration. Further, this branch of teaching has traditionally been held in low esteem and an attractive career structure is often lacking. Finally, almost all pre-school teachers are female and low status and poor conditions tend to characterise female-dominated occupations. Some countries, such as Sweden and Denmark, are now actively encouraging men into careers as pre-school teachers. This may be seen as having some social importance in view of the increasing numbers of lone parent families which are usually headed by women.

3.83 There seems to be no general consensus on optimal pupil/teacher ratios (Kamerman 1975, para.190) and there is little agreement on the appropriate content of teacher preparation courses or instructional methods. Pupil/teacher ratios vary widely even within one country (Austin 1976, p.50 & p.275) and tend to be determined by expediency and in particular the limits placed on funds. In countries

where the pupil/teacher ratio is high, more formal structured programs tend to be followed, e.g. France, Italy. Conversely, in countries such as Sweden or England and Wales where the pupil/teacher ratio is low, the free play philosophy prevails (Austin 1976, p.49 & p.57). Apart from cultural preferences, the larger the group the more difficult it is to manage and a more structured framework is obviously one solution teachers of larger groups must resort to.

3.84 In some countries notably Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom and the U.S.A., pre-school education increasingly is being regarded not simply as one part of the education system nor even as one component in a network of early childhood services which include day care, health, welfare, etc. Rather, it is seen as being linked up with policies aimed at supporting the family and helping communities to help themselves. These concepts are still evolving through an often painful trial-and-error process. Many countries split administrative and financial responsibilities for young children among several different authorities, usually a combination of health, education and welfare. From birth to the age of three policy may be seen primarily in terms of physical care and allocated to health and social welfare authorities. From the age of three upwards education authorities may assume more responsibility (CERI 1977, p.39). The Netherlands is an example of an age-related division of responsibility. Some countries divide responsibility on a functional basis with day care from birth to school age under health and social welfare and nursery school provisions under education (e.g. New Zealand, the U.K.) (CERI 1977, p.39). There are also attempts to bring all facets together. Sweden is the prime example; Norway is working in this direction at local authority level; Denmark is another instance but the Education Ministry is responsible for the provision of half-day classes for children aged 5 to 6. The Federal Republic of Germany gives primary responsibility to Ministries of Social Welfare for both kindergartens and day care. Some countries (e.g. Canada, the U.S.A.) have a variety of provisions but rely more on private and voluntary bodies than other countries (CERI 1977, p.39).

3.85 "Parent involvement" in pre-schools and "parent education" are subjects arousing interest in several countries to the point of becoming cliches in any discussion of early childhood services. The two terms can cover a variety of meanings. Parent involvement may mean "mother helpers" as in New Zealand, who in practice perform mainly domestic tasks, or it may mean, as in Denmark, that parents have genuine decision-making powers, including framing program guidelines. Parent education may mean informal discussion groups for young parents and those expecting their first child, organised by health or welfare authorities, or, under a name such as "child development course" a program for senior secondary school students. It may also mean fairly elaborate academic programs such as the U.K. Open University course or U.S. Home Start workers visiting families.

3.86 Early childhood education is undeniably costly and no country has reached an optimal level of provision in terms of both quality and quantity (CERI 1977, p.40). One tends to be sacrificed to the other. In France, with its wide provision there are reservations about quality (CERI 1977, p.40); in Norway high quality has meant a minimal provision. If it is so beneficial as its supporters claim, no child, rich or poor, should be denied the opportunity to experience it. Yet nowhere is the provision of pre-school education universal, despite stated aims to make it so in various countries, ('universal' pre-school usually means a target of one to two years before compulsory school). So far, no country has expressed any intention to make it compulsory.

3.87 The current 1970s saw a considerable growth in labour force participation by women, many of them married and many responsible for children under school age. Often child care provisions fall short of need. Women in the workforce include an increasing number of middle-class mothers not working solely out of economic necessity. Employment offers them company, independence, a more varied way of life and it may mean an improvement in the emotional quality of their lives despite creating other problems, notably child care. Governments have still to determine what mix of early childhood services best meets actual human needs.

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Chapter 4 - THE AUSTRALIAN SITUATION

I INTRODUCTION

4.1 The development of pre-school education in Australia, in common with other countries discussed in chapter 3, had its origins in philanthropy. During the early years of the twentieth century various groups of well-to-do private citizens and some church bodies established kindergartens throughout the country usually with the specific purpose of providing a service for the children of the poor (Ashby 1977, p.7). Thus inevitably, and from an early stage, the pre-school movement was concerned with children's physical health (the Fry Report 1974, para.3.14; Cumpston & Heinig 1944, p.3) in addition to educational activities, the latter being largely derived initially from the writings of Froebel (Ashby 1977, p.7). This philanthropic basis, combined with the fact that pre-schools were never part of government school systems had several effects. First, there was no suggestion of providing a universal service because voluntary organisations' funds did not permit it. They directed their energies towards the most deprived sections of the community. Second, as the setting up and running of pre-schools involved citizen initiative, over time some people of higher socio-economic status and with the necessary organising skills and leisure recognised the value of pre-school education for their own children. Consequently the two extreme ends of the social spectrum were catered for while the 'average' child, neither sufficiently poor nor sufficiently wealthy, tended to miss out. As in other countries, another effect of the expressed concern with children's physical health meant that health and welfare authorities came to play a role in provisions for the care and education of children under school age. Today this legacy can still be seen in Victoria where the Health Commission, not the Department of Education, is the arm of government responsible for early childhood education. Similarly, at the Federal level, the Office of Child Care in the Department of Social Security administers Commonwealth funds for pre-schools in addition to other children's services programs such as day care. (The Federal Government assists the States with the costs of providing pre-school education through

the Children's Services Program. Under this Program, block grants are allocated to the States for pre-schools, and the States have responsibility for administering these grants. In addition to its support for pre-schools, the Children's Services Program provides funds, both directly and via-the-States, for a wide range of services for children and families.) Thus the Australian experience parallels that of other countries in presenting a confusing picture of health, education and welfare agencies offering rather uncoordinated types of services for children under school age. This diversity is reflected in the range of provision. Sometimes the one establishment will aim to provide broadly based parent and community oriented programs in addition to an educational one, as with the Lady Gowrie Centres which are discussed elsewhere; sometimes the educational emphasis is paramount as in the government funded pre-schools administered by the A.C.T. Schools Authority in the Australian Capital Territory (Aspects of Pre-school Education 1977, p.1). There is a variety of organisations throughout Australia involved in pre-school education including church and other community bodies, non-government schools and some commercial operators with correspondingly wide differences in staffing arrangements, resources and programs.

II AUSTRALIAN STATES AND TERRITORIES

Overview

4.2 In all Australian States and Territories there has been a remarkable expansion of pre-school services since 1966 and especially since 1973. Table 4.1 shows that the proportion of children aged 3 to 5 years attending pre-school in Australia was a mere 8 per cent in 1966 (Fitzgerald 1968, p.3). The growth is readily apparent in Table 4.2 which shows for 1977 the percentage of children enrolled in the year prior to school entry; for three States and the two Territories the percentage is 80 or above. Two other States are not far below this level. The lowest level is for New South Wales with a rough estimate of 40 per cent (Australian Education Council 1977, p.3). Table 4.3 shows the growth in absolute numbers in the period 1973-1978; the most marked increases are in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria (Rowlands 1979, Table 3).

4.3 Much of the data used for the above mentioned tables are not strictly comparable so that caution is needed in drawing conclusions about differences between States and changes over a period. Unfortunately these statistics appear to be the best available at present. The 1966 data include 3-year-olds while the more recent data mainly refer to the year before entry to primary school and generally this applies to 4 and 5-year-olds. Today there is still relatively little coverage for 3-year-olds. Some States offer educational services for young children in their primary schools which are similar to services offered to pre-school children in other States. Fitzgerald noted that this made it difficult to obtain an exact figure from the 1966 kindergarten data (Fitzgerald 1968, p.3). Taking both the 1969 primary and pre-school enrolment into account it was concluded that "Western Australia and Queensland, which approximate the Australian average for pre-school enrolments ... enrol considerably smaller proportions of young children in their primary schools. They are thus educating a smaller proportion of the age group than New South Wales, in spite of this State's very small proportion of children entering pre-school" (Fitzgerald & Crosher 1971, p.18). Tasmania has absorbed separate pre-schools for 5-year-olds into school kindergarten classes which are comparable with kindergartens in New South Wales schools and the preparatory grade in Victorian schools (Fitzgerald & Crosher 1971, p.32).

TABLE 4.1*

Proportions of Children Aged 3-5 Years Attending Primary School and Pre-school in Australia: All States - 1966

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	ACT	Aust.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Primary school	34	31	19	28	14	10	35	28
Pre-school	3	17	7	9	8	10	34	8
Total	37	48	26	37	22	20	69	36

* Table from Fitzgerald (1968), p.3. (Reprinted by permission of The Australian Council for Educational Research Limited.)

TABLE 4.2*

No. of Pre-school Centres/4 y.o. population/
% enrolled in the year before school entry/
Commonwealth Block Grant Allocation 1977/78

State/ Territory	Approx. No. of Pre-Schools	4 y.o. pop'n (1976 census)	% of children enrolled in the year prior to school entry	Commonwealth Block Grant Allocation (1977/78)
NSW	700	91,814	40% (rough estimate) incl. 2.25% in State Pre-schools.	$7.93m.
Victoria	1,102	70,557	63%+	$12.18m.
Queensland	700	40,896	84.4% incl. 55.7% in State Pre-schools	$6.96m.
WA	458 +58 Small Schools with Pre-School programs	23,334	72% (5 y.o.)**	$4.82m.
SA	332	22,408	92%	$5.19m.
Tasmania	190	7,920	80%	$1.92m.
ACT	68	4,768	90%+	
Northern Territory	36 +38(Aborig.)	2,554	90%+	

** The majority of children enrolled in pre-schools in Western Australia are five-year-olds, of whom 72% are enrolled in pre-school programs.

NOTE:

1. Universal availability of pre-school education for children in the year before school enrolment has virtually been achieved in most States and the Territories, five making the major provision through the school system.
2. The discrepancy between the sizes of the block grants when populations are compared is due to the fact that Commonwealth funding is calculated on the basis of actual services being provided. The Table thus shows clearly the differential in pre-school provision between the States.

* Table from Australian Education Council (1977), p.3

4.4 Whereas the year prior to school entry applies to 4-year-olds in most States, it involves mainly 5-year-olds in Western Australia where the mean school entry age is approximately six years. Sometimes a State prefers to record the number of child places rather than enrolments (e.g. see Table 4.3). The above figures do not refer to day care centres and yet some of these centres provide educational services comparable to those of sessional pre-school centres. Furthermore the number of enrolments at private day care centres may not be known to State administrators, especially where these centres are not subsidised by the Government. Thus there is little to go on in determining the extent of pre-school services in Australia. Hopefully, this will be remedied by the first national collection of statistics covering the provision of children's services in Australia which began in October 1980. The collection has gathered data on all licensed and supervised pre-school and centre and family-based child care services throughout all States and Territories (in Queensland only day care has been covered). The collection was carried out by a Workshop comprising the relevant State/Territory authorities responsible for the licensing or supervising of child care and/or pre-school services together with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Commonwealth Departments of Social Security and Education. The first results of the survey are expected to be available in the latter half of 1981.

4.5 Australian pre-school education has had a long dependence on parental and charitable effort. The minimal Government involvement until recent times together with the fragmentation of responsibility among different Government Departments probably accounts for much of the difficulty in trying to obtain a clear picture of what is happening in pre-school education today. More uniform data is obviously needed in greater quantity and quality. Hopefully this could tell us more of the apparent over-supply of teachers which has been noted by the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs (1980, p.65). A key area is child care where there is an "absence of reliable information and comprehensive statistical information" (Ashby 1979a, p.6). The Australian Education Council Working Party on Pre-school Education especially emphasises the need for more reliable

information in the area of special requirements e.g. Aboriginal, migrant, handicapped and geographically isolated children (Ashby 1979b, p.58). With better data the chances are improved of identifying special areas of need so that scarce resources may be channelled more efficiently in their direction.

TABLE 4.3*

No. of children in pre-schools x States

Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA[c]	WA[b]	Tas	NT[a]	ACT	Total
1973	26946[e]	42105	14600	9447	14684	7376	2300	4067	121525
1974	NA	48352	18800	11063	16058	6582	2507	4585	
1975	NA	52108	24900	13575	18518	7344	2580	4980	
1976	NA	55302	31500	18820	21966	7255	2895	5102	
1977	NA	58326	36100	20921	24228	7130	3115	4940	
1978	25296[d]	60159	39500	17000	25267	7317	3231	5371	183141

a Includes Aboriginal Pre-school Centres

b Includes children of all ages

c These figures are heavily qualified, because data have been obtained from different sources. The latest year covers only 4 to 5-year-olds.

d This figure records child places not children.

e From Fry (1974:6).

* Table from Rowlands (1979).

New South Wales

4.6 Policy. The N.S.W. Government encourages community group activities in preference to State provided services; it also gives priority to day care for the children of working parents (Major Trends 1979, p.61).

4.7 Administration. Primary responsibility is divided between the Department of Youth and Community Services and the Department of Education in New South Wales. State pre-schools have been established by the Department of Education within primary schools in high need areas with children usually attending five half-day sessions per week. The Department of Youth and Community Services provides advisory services on appropriate development programs to licensed centres administered outside the Department of Education (Major Trends 1979, p.61). The State's licensing regulations come under the Child Welfare Act 1939, as amended 1968 (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.1). The Department of Youth and Community Services (1978, p.53) has also been responsible for administering Commonwealth funding through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs for Aboriginal children attending pre-school. As well as this government involvement the State depends considerably on the Kindergarten Union, local government councils and community groups (Coleman 1976, p.14).

4.8 Special Provisions. There are 13 pre-schools administered by the Save the Children Fund, a voluntary organisation which has established pre-schools to cater especially for Aboriginals (APA, N.S.W. Branch 1980, p.4; Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1978, p.29). In 1976 six of the pre-schools were situated on former Aboriginal reserves. A requirement for government subsidy has been that enrolments be at least 80 per cent Aboriginal (Save the Children Fund N.S.W. Division 1976, p.10). Several innovative programs have been implemented using Outreach workers - one developing an Outreach program for isolated families in a country area, one to work with families in a rapidly developing housing area and a third concerned with an industrial area. A project orientation period has been provided for service users by the Outreach workers and the staff of two Mobile Resource and Information Units (APA, N.S.W. Branch 1979, p.4). In 1979/80 the State budget made provision for capital grants for the development of additional Long Day Care Services. Grants for special services include a multi-cultural resource centre and a mobile unit for families living in caravan parks (APA, N.S.W. Branch 1980, p.7).

4.9 Coverage. The proportion of children aged 3 to 5 years attending pre-school in N.S.W. was 3 per cent in 1966 (Fitzgerald 1968, p.3). For 1977 it was roughly estimated that about 40 per cent of 4-year-olds were in early childhood services of some kind (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.1). In 1977 the Department of Education was responsible for pre-school groups in some 80 schools while the Department of Youth and Community Services (through its Division of Early Childhood Services) licensed and supervised all other centres, both pre-school and day care (1041 licensed facilities with a total capacity of 30,276, age-range 0-5 years). 1200 child places were available in government pre-schools (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.1). The Kindergarten Union of N.S.W. also provides early childhood services and in 1978 was responsible for the administration of 80 sessional pre-schools, two long day care centres and two mobile units. Over 6,000 children were enrolled in Kindergarten Union centres and over one third of these met the needs criteria of the Office of Child Care (APA, N.S.W. Branch 1979, pp.11-12). The State's licensing regulations do not require trained staff in centres with less than 30 children; where children are under 2 years of age a nursing qualification is needed (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.1).

4.10 Funding. New South Wales has given limited recurrent assistance to community pre-schools; in 1976 this was a maximum of $2500 per annum per unit. It has provided some recurrent support ($315,000 in 1975-76) to the Sydney Day Nurseries and Nursery Schools Association which is oriented to educational programs and which operated 18 day care centres in 1976. The State has not provided capital assistance for either pre-school or day care centres (Coleman 1976, p.14). Since 1973 the bulk of capital funding has come from the Commonwealth Government. With recurrent costs, the State makes up the difference between Commonwealth subsidy and total cost of operation in State pre-schools. The State grants a subsidy of 20 per cent of salaries of agreed staff to licensed non-profit-making centres provided by community groups (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, pp.1-2). The Sydney Morning Herald has claimed that,

following the introduction of the Commonwealth block grant, the combined State and Federal subsidy for salaries at N.S.W. community pre-schools has fallen from 93 per cent in the first half of 1977 to 65.3 per cent two years later (Canu 1979, p.11). The Department of Youth and Community Services mentioned in its 1977 Annual Report (1978, p.49) that a requirement of Commonwealth funding was that pre-schools introduce integrated or extended services. According to the Department it experienced administrative problems in verifying that such services had been implemented.

Victoria

4.11 Policy. Victorian Government policy "favours provision of one year of free pre-school education with the emphasis on multi-use of buildings and regionalisation of advisory services working closely with local government and community agencies" (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.3).

4.12 Administration. The Health Commission is the main central body responsible for pre-school education in Victoria. Until recently it was the Department of Health and its Division of Pre-school Child Development. The objectives of this Division have been to assist local communities in assessing early childhood needs, to foster adequate standards for health and development and to cooperate with voluntary agencies, government bodies and tertiary institutions concerned with early childhood services (Department of Health, Victoria 1978, p.1). In the past the work of the Department of Health has been supplemented by independent organisations such as the Free Kindergarten Union, various church groups and the Melbourne City Council (Fitzgerald 1968, p.6). Teachers are employed by local committees who are responsible for the administration of the local pre-school centre (Major Trends 1979, p.62).

4.13 Special Provisions. In its 1973 report the Consultative Council on Pre-School Child Development favoured the creation of regional early childhood development complexes to provide preventive health care, education and day care (with each unit having a self-evaluating component) (Ashby 1977, p.13). By 1977 Early Child

Development Complexes providing integrated services had been established in six Regions of the State (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.2). In July 1979 there were 53 centres offering an extended hour program; these centres are open from 9.00 am to 3.30 pm or 7.00 am to 6.00 pm (Health Commission of Victoria 1979, p.3). During 1978/79 the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs provided funds for 33 untrained Aboriginal assistants (Health Commission of Victoria 1979, p.16). In 1980 there were 115 Aboriginal children enrolled at subsidised Victorian kindergartens (Health Commission of Victoria, 1980).

4.14 Coverage. The proportion of children aged 3-5 years attending pre-school in Victoria was 17 per cent in 1966 (Fitzgerald 1968, p.3). In 1977 about 63 percent of children could attend a subsidised pre-school kindergarten (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.2). In July 1979 there were 58,004 children enrolled in 1,114 kindergartens (Health Commission of Victoria 1979, p.3). In recent times there has been an over-supply of teachers for positions in subsidised kindergartens; an excess supply of 380 teachers has been predicted for 1984 (Derody & Sheehan 1978, p.53). Consequently the student intake for early childhood courses in Victorian colleges has been reduced (Department of Health, Victoria 1978, p.3).

4.15 Funding. The Victorian Government subsidises but does not fully cover the cost of establishing and maintaining pre-school services; local groups are also financially involved (Major Trends 1979, p.62). Government subsidies cover staff salaries, long service leave and workers' compensation; in 1977 there was an additional annual amount of $2,600 for each full-time kindergarten and $1,300 for each full-time play centre (Department of Health, Victoria 1978, p.3). "Funding depends upon compliance with regulations which require a trained pre-school teacher and an aide for up to 30 children and the subsidies are limited to centres with 20 or more enrolled in each session" (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.2).

Queensland

4.16 Policy. In 1972 Queensland decided on a policy of free non-compulsory pre-school education for all four and five-year-old

children. The Queensland Department of Education became responsible for implementing this policy and establishing pre-schools to provide one year of pre-school education (Ashby 1977, p.13).

4.17 Administration. In Queensland primary administrative responsibility for pre-school services is shared between the Queensland Department of Education and the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland, an organisation of independent community kindergartens. The Department is responsible for centres it has established and those relinquished by parent committees to the Department. In 1977 the Department took over the 26 pre-schools previously administered by the Creche and Kindergarten Association (Plummer 1979, p.287). The Department of Education "has subsidised the advisory and administrative services of the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland as the means of supervising the quality of educational programs offered by community kindergartens. The Creche and Kindergarten Association also acts as an independent recommending agency for payment of government grants by the Department of Education" (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.3). Other bodies involved in early childhood services include the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement and the Early Childhood Resource Unit in the Department of Children's Services. The Early Childhood Resource Unit is concerned with upgrading the standard of care, encouraging a wide range of care and providing an advisory consultant service (APA, Queensland Branch 1979, p.31).

4.18 Special Provisions. As well as its provision of pre-school facilities in association with existing primary schools, the Department is concerned with integrating handicapped children into regular pre-school groups, providing a pre-school correspondence program for isolated children and implementing a family grouping approach in small rural schools (Ashby 1977, p.13). (A Commonwealth allowance of $120 per annum is payable for each child enrolled for the full school year in the pre-school correspondence course conducted by the Queensland Education Department.) Integrated classes of pre-school and Year 1 children have been set up in small, mainly

country schools with insufficient children for a separate pre-school unit (Major Trends 1979, p.62).

4.19 Coverage. The proportion of children aged 3-5 years attending pre-school in Queensland was 7 per cent in 1966 (Fitzgerald 1968, p.3). By June 1977 84.4 per cent of children one year below school age had the opportunity of attending pre-school facilities - 55.7 per cent in State pre-school centres and 28.7 per cent in non-State centres (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.4). In June 1977 about 17,000 children aged 0-6 years were catered for in:

a) 267 community kindergarten units funded through the Department of Education;
b) 50 units (mainly for Aboriginal children) operated or sponsored by the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement;
c) 350 child care centres supervised by the Department of Children's Services.

The State pre-school system comprised 427 pre-school units providing 21,350 sessional pre-school places, each child attending for the equivalent of five half-day sessions per week (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.4). Pre-school enrolments with the Department of Education at 1 August 1979 were:

Centres	22,356
Early education classes	995
Correspondence	841

Of a total of 24,192 pre-school enrolments, 12,401 were aged 4 years, 11,310 were aged 5 and 121 were under 3 (1979 Annual Report - Queensland Education, p.45).

4.20 The maximum to be accommodated in a single pre-school unit is a group of 25 children with a teacher and an aide (Major Trends 1979, p.62). At 1 August 1979 the number of pre-school teachers was 731, including 31 males (1979 Annual Report - Queensland

Education, p.50). In the 1978 report of the Brisbane Kindergarten Teachers College, a marked decline in the demand for pre-school teachers was noted (APA, Queensland Branch 1979, p.37).

4.21 Funding. During 1976/77 recurrent expenditure on State pre-school centres and community kindergartens was funded fairly equally from Commonwealth and State subsidies (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.4). The situation has altered with the advent of the Commonwealth Government "Block Grant" Scheme. The Creche and Kindergarten Association has pointed out that the Commonwealth contribution to salaries and wages of community kindergarten staff fell from 75 per cent in 1976 to about 37 per cent in 1979/80. It also noted that the State Government had provided supplementary funding to partly offset the shortfall so that in 1979/80 affiliated kindergartens received funding at the rate of 84 per cent of approved staff costs (APA, Queensland Branch 1980, p.4).

South Australia

4.22 Policy. South Australia has a policy of one year of free pre-school education for all four-year-olds (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.6).

4.23 Administration. Pre-school educational services are the responsibility of the Department of Education (child/parent centres) and the Kindergarten Union (pre-school kindergartens). The Department of Community Welfare is the licensing authority for day care facilities. Since 1974 the Childhood Services Council has been the planning, coordinating and funding authority for the State. The Council has an independent chairman and single representation from each of the Departments of Treasury, Education, Public Health and Community Welfare; also represented are community groups and the Kindergarten Union (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.6).

4.24 Special Provisions. There are Integrated Service Centres which include kindergarten/day care centres. These are operated by management committees with Education, Community Welfare or Kindergarten Union representation on them - depending on which

organisation was initially involved (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.6). There is a program to enable Aboriginal men and women to qualify as pre-school teachers through a course which provides for a qualification in each of three stages (Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1980, p.36). The Kindergarten Union has a number of mobile services and resource centres which cover most of the State; there are also some toy libraries. In the northern and western region of the State these services especially cater to the needs of the isolated (Kindergartern Union of South Australia 1980, p.12). There is the 'Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise' program which uses a weekly 'Tea and Sugar' train to serve isolated children; a four wheel drive vehicle and caravan operates where there is no railway service (Ebbeck 1978, p.43).

4.25 Coverage. The proportion of children aged 3-5 years attending pre-school in South Australia was 9 per cent in 1966 (Fitzgerald 1968, p.3). By 1977 there were places for 92 per cent of all four-year-olds (19,229 children attended in June 1977)(Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.6). In August 1978 the Department of Education was responsible for 74 child/parent centres which catered for 4,792 children. Thirty-five of these centres were in country areas. There were also centres with integrated services in cooperation with the Department for Community Welfare, Health Commission and other community organisations (Education Department of South Australia 1979, p.45). As in other States there have been difficulties in obtaining pre-school statistics. In South Australia different sets of figures have been arrived at. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (1978, p.4) found that in 1977 there were totals of 23,091 enrolled in pre-schools and 24,243 attending pre-schools whereas the ACER found there were 20,921 in pre-schools for the same year (see Table 4.3). In July 1979 there were 26,765 children attending South Australian pre-schools (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1980, p.5).

4.26 Funding. In recent times all kindergarten and child/parent centres have been fully funded using Commonwealth and State money. In 1976/77 all capital expenditure on kindergartens and

child/parent centres was met by the State (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.6).

Western Australia

4.27 Policy. The State has adopted a policy of providing free and non-compulsory pre-school education to as many five-year-olds as possible (Australian Education Council 1977, p.5). (The mean entry age for primary school in Western Australia is approximately six years.)

4.28 Administration. Since January 1978 the Western Australian Department of Education has been primarily responsible for pre-school services. At that time the new Early Childhood Branch of the Education Department was formed by the amalgamation of the former Western Australian Pre-school Board and the former pre-primary section of the Department (Education Department, W.A. 1979, p.14). Parent committees were able to choose between a) transfer to the Education Department, and b) continuation as an "independent" unit (with committees responsible for meeting maintenance and running costs and the State providing salaries for teachers and aides) (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.5). The Pre-school Education Board was established in 1973 to take over the functions of the Kindergarten Association, a voluntary organisation. In 1975 it was renamed the Western Australian Pre-school Board and its widened responsibilities included child care and guidance (Ashby 1977, p.13). The Early Childhood Services Unit in the Department for Community Services works with communities in the development of subsidised day care services (APA, W.A. Branch 1980, p.15).

4.29 Special Provision. A variety of services has been developed for isolated children. These include a) mobile units with trained staff to visit children on stations and Aboriginal reserves, b) radio broadcast educational programs to isolated stations, c) the Isolated Families Correspondence Scheme, and d) Tea and Sugar Train Visits to children living in small communities along the railway line (APA, W.A. Branch 1979, p.3). There is special provision for remote areas with a large migrant pre-school population (Major Trends 1979, p.64). A separate Aboriginal Pre-school Education Division, with a

total of 10 advisory and support staff in 1978, specialises in the educational needs of Aboriginal children of pre-school age. The number of Aboriginal children enrolled has risen from 89 in 1971 (APA, W.A. Branch 1978, p.4) to 1,692 in March 1980 (APA, W.A. Branch 1980, p.4). In 1980 there were about 140 Aboriginal staff employed in various positions in early childhood centres throughout the State (APA, W.A. Branch 1980, p.3).

4.30 Coverage. The proportion of children aged 3-5 years attending pre-school in Western Australia was 8 per cent in 1966 (Fitzgerald 1968, p.3). In 1977 there were 18,000 five-year-olds in pre-school education - 72 per cent of all five-year-olds in the State. In the same year there were 4,000 four-year-olds enrolled - 19 per cent of all four year-olds (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.5). On 1 August 1979 there were 11,662 full-time (attendance of at least four half days per week) and 1,577 part-time pupils in pre-primary classes; 7,302 full-time and 3,669 part-time pupils in pre-school centres (Education Department, W.A. 1980, p.43).

4.31 Funding. The Commonwealth and State Governments provide funds for pre-school education for five-year-olds. A levy is required of parents whose children attend "independent" status centres. The State Government has introduced a per capita subsidy for five-year-olds attending 'truly independent' (i.e. non-government) pre-school centres (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.5).

Tasmania

4.32 Policy. State Government Policy is to ensure universal availability of free pre-school education for four-year-olds within the school system (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.7).

4.33 Administration. Except for a few privately owned centres, all pre-school education in Tasmania is run by the State Education Department (Major Trends 1979, p.65). During the 1970s the Department increased its involvement and established kindergarten classes in primary schools (Ashby 1977, p.13.). The Department of Social Welfare supervises child care facilities (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.6).

4.34 Special Provisions. Home visiting by teachers has become an integral part of most pre-school programs. Recently Home Liaison Officers have been appointed in some schools, especially in new housing development areas (Major Trends 1979, p.65). In 1977 there were seven mobile units to service isolated areas (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.7).

4.35 Coverage. The proportion of children aged 3-5 years attending pre-school in Tasmania was 10 per cent in 1966 (Fitzgerald 1968, p.3). In 1977 the Department of Education was responsible for pre-school education in 190 centres and 80 per cent of 4-year-old children were receiving pre-school education (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, pp.6-7).

4.36 Funding. The State Government with Federal assistance meets the costs of staff salaries, minimum maintenance and basic equipment (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.6).

Northern Territory

4.37 Policy. The aim is universal availability for 4-year-olds. For Aboriginal children the aim is two years of pre-school experience (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.8).

4.38 Administration. The Commonwealth Department of Education (Northern Territory Division) has been the responsible authority for pre-school education in the Northern Territory. The relevant authority is now the Northern Territory Department of Education. Pre-schools are administratively integrated with primary schools and cater for the 4 to 5-year-olds (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.8).

4.39 Special Provisions. Pre-school children are provided for by School of the Air Programs which operate from Alice Springs and Katherine. The programs involve radio broadcasts, correspondence programs, visits by teachers, and annual visits to the school (Plummer 1979, p.292). Children younger than four years may be enrolled where vacancies exist (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.8).

Handicapped children are being integrated into normal pre-schools (Commonwealth Department of Education 1978, p.30). There are also bilingual provisions for some Aboriginal children (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.7).

4.40 Coverage. In 1967 there were 14 kindergartens in community centres serving about 800 children and another 15 centres catering for 380 children on Aboriginal settlements and mission stations (Fitzgerald 1968, p.4). Of about 95 separate centres in 1977, there were about 2000 enrolled in community pre-schools and 1200 in Aboriginal schools (Commonwealth Department of Education 1978, p.30). The majority of the 19 bilingual schools in 1977 had pre-schools attached (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.7). Coverage in the period 1967-1977 appears to have more than doubled. Ashby (1979a, p.5) has estimated that more than 80 per cent of the eligible child age-group in the Northern Territory now receives pre-school education.

4.41 Funding. The major funding body is the Commonwealth Government. Funds for pre-school education are now administered by the Northern Territory Department of Education.

Australian Capital Territory

4.42 Policy. The Schools Authority seeks "to provide some pre-school experience for all A.C.T. resident four-year-old children immediately prior to their enrolment at Primary School, if their parents so desire" (Aspects of Pre-school Education 1977, p.1).

4.43 Administration. Pre-school education in the Australian Capital Territory has been provided by the Commonwealth Government since 1945. The A.C.T. Schools Authority bears the major administrative responsibility for pre-school education. Through various governmental agencies the Commonwealth Department of Education provides and maintains pre-school buildings and playgrounds as well as staffing each pre-school. Generally the aim is to locate pre-schools within or adjacent to primary school sites (Aspects of Pre-school Education 1977, p.1). The Department of the Capital Territory is

responsible for the supervision and registration of privately run child care centres (Major Trends 1979, p.65).

4.44 Special Provisions. A mobile unit has been providing pre-school experience to children in outlying areas of the A.C.T. Where places are available, children aged between three and four years may be enrolled in pre-schools. Three special education pre-schools provide for about 60 handicapped children. There is a program for deaf children with home visits for children aged three years and under, auditory training and programs in local pre-schools. At the Causeway Pre-School there is an early stimulation program for the young siblings of handicapped children (Aspects of Pre-school Education 1977, pp.53-54). Provision is made for the early placement of children in special need, including migrants (Major Trends 1979, p.65). At least two special places are allowed in each pre-school for children in special need (e.g. speech, behavioural or family problems). Two places in each pre-school are reserved for migrant children with language difficulties who would not normally enrol (Aspects of Pre-school Education 1977, p.4).

4.45 Coverage. The proportion of children aged 3-5 years attending pre-school in the A.C.T. was 34 per cent in 1966 (Fitzgerald 1968, p.3). In 1977 more than 90 per cent of 4-year-olds were enrolled in 68 centres (Australian Education Council 1977, Appendix B, p.7). In that year about 5,000 children attended. Each single pre-school unit is staffed by at least one qualified pre-school teacher and assistant (Aspects of Pre-school Education 1977, pp.1-3).

4.46 Funding. The A.C.T. Schools Authority is a statutory authority wholly funded by the Commonwealth Government. The Government meets the costs of buildings, staff salaries and the maintenance of grounds and buildings. The parents meet other costs including the purchasing and maintaining of equipment (Major Trends 1979, p.65).

III CURRENT PRACTICES

4.47 Despite variations among States in the level of provision of pre-school education there is a reasonable degree of consensus in their approaches towards it. Generally pre-schools offer programs on a part-day (i.e. sessional) basis for 41-42 weeks of the year (the Fry Report 1974, p.31). Preference is given to children who turn four in the year in which they attend (Fry 1978, p.2) although children with special needs or in special circumstances may be admitted at an earlier age (Aspects of Pre-school Education 1977, pp.3-4). Usually one qualified teacher and one aide (who may or may not be trained) are responsible for each group of approximately 25 children (the Fry Report 1974, p.31; Ashby 1979b, p.41). Teachers' qualifications are generally in early childhood education but this does not appear to be a specified requirement except in Queensland and the A.C.T. (Fry 1978, p.5; Ashby 1979b, p.41).

4.48 'Parent involvement' as a worthy objective in itself is much discussed in Australia (e.g. see Ashby 1972, pp.50-53) as well as in other countries. In practice it usually means membership of a managerial-cum-fund-raising committee and for mothers, assignment to a roster for performing routine domestic tasks (e.g. see Aspects of Pre-school Education 1977 p.34). In some instances administrators may encourage parental involvement in the educational program but this is largely left to the initiative of individual teachers (Ashby 1979b, p.43). Mothers' (or in rare instances, fathers') presence during pre-school sessions, ostensibly to assist in the preparation of snacks, cleaning etc. is claimed to provide them with opportunities for observation of their own and other children. In effect, unless guided and made to feel welcome by a particularly helpful teacher or aide, many mothers are liable to feel shy and awkward or kept so busy that the inherent possibilities may be largely wasted. By the same token the supervision of a group of 25 active four-year-olds does not permit inexperienced teachers or aides much opportunity to interact with parents at anything but a superficial level. As at other levels

of education, such 'involvement' has often been used as a cost-saving device. If participation by parents in pre-school education is genuinely supposed to help ease children's transition from home to school, a properly designed program would be needed with time set aside for parent and teacher to become acquainted and discuss each individual child in less frenetic surroundings. Joyce Watt's scenario (1977, p.86) for an expanded role for the pre-school teacher as a link between the community and the education system could provide some guidelines (see chapter 3, section on U.K.).

IV PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM

4.49 Unlike primary or secondary teachers in the past, Australian pre-school teachers have not been bound to follow a set curriculum (Ashby 1972, p.41). The reasons are first, the lack of centralised government control over this form of education (Ashby 1977, p.7) and second, a belief that heavily structured or formal curricula are unsuitable at this level of education (Ashby 1977, p.46). In general the approach of pre-school teachers in this country has favoured the 'traditional' free play program with more emphasis on providing for individual children's social and emotional development with creative activities playing a conspicuous role (Fry 1978, p.3; Ashby 1972, p.46). The undiluted Montessori method featuring a prepared environment and very specific items of equipment never really gained a firm hold (Hooks 1978). Nor, to date, have more recently developed structured programs, usually originating in the United States and aimed at enhancing the cognitive development of disadvantaged children (Ashby 1977, p.8). On the other hand, because of the relative freedom accorded them in planning programs, pre-school teachers may, and do, borrow techniques and ideas for activities from both (Ashby 1972, p.5 and p.41).

V SPECIAL GROUPS

4.50 The particular needs of Aboriginal, non-English-speaking migrants and physically handicapped children have received increasing attention in recent years as well as the needs of children who are socially and emotionally disadvantaged through poverty, abuse or neglect. Some efforts have been made to devise special programs for Aboriginal children and these are discussed elsewhere in more detail. As mentioned above, children in difficult circumstances or children who do not speak English at home or are handicapped may qualify for earlier than normal entry to pre-school. However, it is obvious that earlier admission of itself will not necessarily ensure that such children overcome their disadvantages in relation to their peers. Specially designed programs are being developed and most are still at the experimental stage. One serious deterrent to the implementation of such programs on any large scale is the question of cost. Such programs involve a better than average pupil/teacher ratio in order that children may receive intensive individual attention. Again, such teachers need additional training and experience beyond their usual qualifications to equip them to deal with these children. For example, multilingual staff should be a prerequisite for pre-schools in areas of high migrant density if successful communication is to occur among teachers, parents and children. Additional staff are needed to provide an adequate program for children with various types of physical handicap. Even where it is thought preferable to integrate such children into normal pre-school classes the necessity for extra staff attention and resources (e.g. special equipment for the visually handicapped) does not diminish. The view of the Department of Social Security (1981) is that:

> "At this stage, it is appropriate to consider whether pre-schools should assume responsibility for not only pre-schoolers with physical disabilities, but also those with mental and behavioural disabilities. The recent ad hoc growth in early intervention services for disabled children is a response by the community and individual State authorities to the needs of disabled children that

> have demonstrably not been met by the formal pre-school system. While we agree that the cost of implementing programs that can integrate disabled children with normal children is great, it would appear that a good proportion of the costs are already being incurred in the community by individual families and voluntary groups."

The Commonwealth, as a condition of its block-grant funds, has stated that priority should be given to funding services catering for special need groups (Department of Social Security, 1981).

VI TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATION

4.51 The years 1900 to 1916 saw the establishment of training colleges for kindergarten teachers in all Australian States except Tasmania (the Fry Report 1974, p.15). In 1932 an additional college was established in Sydney, the only teacher training institution in Australia directed towards training staff for day care centres (Fry 1975, p.3). From 1941 the Tasmanian Department of Education assumed responsibility for the supply of pre-school teachers; training has taken place at the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education (Australian Commission of Advanced Education 1973, p.36).

4.52 In 1968 the State Grants (Pre-school Teachers Colleges) Act was passed. This was a Commonwealth Act to grant financial assistance to the States for the purposes of building projects in connexion with pre-school teachers colleges (Commonwealth Acts 1968, pp.777-779). In the period 1968-71 the Commonwealth Government made available unmatched capital grants totalling $2.5 million for these purposes (Australian Commission of Advanced Education 1973, p.37). In 1973 a special committee on teacher education reported to the Australian Commission on Advanced Education. The report, Teacher Education 1973-1975, recommended Commonwealth funding (including recurrent grants) for the pre-school teachers colleges provided that they satisfied the requirements for support under advanced education financial arrangements. This entailed the colleges' becoming self-governing under the supervision of an appropriate State

coordinating body. At that time, only one, the college then known as Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers College (now the State College of Victoria - Institute of Early Childhood Development) was self-governing. In all other cases college councils and principals were to some degree subordinate to kindergarten unions or associations (Australian Commission of Advanced Education 1973, pp.39-40). In order to qualify for Commonwealth support the colleges made the necessary adjustments which meant that they and their controlling councils became responsible for all financial, academic and staffing matters in common with other colleges of advanced education (Australian Commission of Advanced Education 1973, p.40; Beazley 1973c, p.574; Commission on Advanced Education 1975, para.4.1).

4.53 At about the same time the then Commonwealth Government, committed to a policy of extending the availability of pre-school education, established the Australian Pre-schools Committee (Beazley 1973a) and in 1973 made special scholarships available for all pre-school student teachers undertaking approved courses (Department of Education 1973).

4.54 Colleges of advanced education were at that period in an expansionary phase and interest in early childhood education was high. Parent and teacher groups who had been applying pressure to State Governments for years to expand pre-school education now looked towards the Commonwealth Government with renewed hope. Some colleges of advanced education, mostly those which had formerly been State teachers colleges, demonstrated their awareness of these trends by applying to their relevant State coordinating authorities with proposals for courses in early childhood education. A number of such courses were approved for funding by the Australian Commission on Advanced Education. As at 1979 some 26 colleges of advanced education (including kindergarten teachers colleges) were offering courses in early childhood education (Department of Education 1978, pp.28-29). In addition, ten universities and about 25 colleges of technical and further education run courses in the early childhood area (Resource Information Bulletin 1978). Thus, the opportunities for training as a pre-school teacher and for study in early childhood education have

grown considerably. It could be asked whether the expansion of courses might have made too heavy demands on the rather limited pool of available expertise in Australia. Obviously some institutions have been able to recruit staff from overseas just as other tertiary education institutions have done but it is interesting to note that, even before this expansion in courses occurred the report mentioned above noted:

> "The pre-school teachers colleges in Australia have experienced difficulty in attracting staff who have pursued higher level studies in areas relevant to the work done in the colleges. College staff are usually selected by open advertisement, and visiting lecturers provide much of the necessary specialist tuition" (Australian Commission on Advanced Education 1973, para.4.12).

4.55 The reasons for this are several. First, kindergarten or pre-school teaching has traditionally been seen as an exclusively female domain. Women are less likely than men to pursue higher degree courses and, because of their other social roles as wives and mothers, are more likely to have more broken career patterns than men. Thus problems of obtaining staff with suitable qualifications and of continuity in staffing were bound to arise. Teachers who did undertake advanced study were required to do so in Britain (Ashby 1977, p.7) or U.S.A.

4.56 Despite recent developments early childhood education in Australia is still burdened with the legacy of its past. As non-compulsory education it has always tended to be regarded as marginal by both governments and the education "establishment"; it was viewed as a pleasant adjunct to a child's education, but not an essential one. It was seen to be run by charitable organisations with philanthropic women acting as patrons. State Governments did make grants to pre-school teachers colleges and as mentioned earlier (para.4.52) unmatched capital grants were available but there was no Commonwealth assistance with recurrent costs until 1973. Consequently these colleges were involved in voluntary fund-raising in a way that

no other similar post-secondary education institutions ever were (Australian Commission on Advanced Education 1973, para.4.7).

4.57 The marginal status of pre-school teaching was reinforced by poor salaries (Fry 1975, p.7) and conditions and the lack of an attractive career structure. The Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia commented:

> "...teachers were drawn from families who could afford to finance their daughters through a period of training and contribute to their support when as teachers their salaries were little more than pocket money" (Karmel 1971, para.10.16).

These disadvantages applied throughout Australia. Thus pre-school teaching came to be seen as a genteel occupation for upper-middle class girls whose families were in a position to support them. Even though the period of training was already three years by 1943 (Fry 1975, p.6) (i.e. well before primary school teacher education courses were increased from two to three years) this type of teaching was regarded as having lower status and requiring less pedagogical skill. It was a respectable "fill-in" activity for a girl between leaving school and settling into married life. A few gestures were made by State Governments to assist small numbers of students but it was not until 1966 that Commonwealth tertiary education scholarships became open to them as assistance available throughout Australia (Fry 1975, p.7). The question of salaries remained problematical because teachers employed by voluntary organisations realised that the finances of such bodies depended on fees paid by parents, many of whom could not afford increased fees (Fry 1975, p.7). It was not until the early 1970s that pre-school teachers in some States received award rate salaries equivalent to those of other three-year trained teachers (Fry 1975, p.8). Before that, some teachers had received less than untrained staff who were members of the Miscellaneous Workers Union and mothercraft nurses whose training was of 18 months' duration (Fry 1975, p.8).

4.58 The colleges' integration into the advanced education system funded by the Commonwealth has provided them with a more secure financial basis. Academic staff receive the same salaries as their counterparts in other colleges and students are eligible for the same assistance as other tertiary students. As a career pre-school teaching has undoubtedly become more attractive. Moreover, research carried out into early childhood development and education, especially in the United States, has drawn attention to the interesting possibilities of working with young children. As in other countries, and despite the lack of much positive encouragement, men have begun to enrol in early childhood education courses, albeit in small numbers (Colleges of Advanced Education 1978, p.23). An exception to this general lack of encouragement in Australia was the statement made by the then Commonwealth Minister for Education, the Hon. Kim E. Beazley, MP on 16 January 1973 when announcing the creation of special scholarships for pre-school teachers:

> "I hope more men will become pre-school teachers, as men are psychologically necessary for any young child" (Department of Education 1973, p.2).

4.59 There are still various problems to be overcome in pre-school teacher education. Comments made by G.F. Ashby point to conflicts still not resolved. For example, he states that "the absence of a clear theoretical basis for the Australian pre-school has made the term 'education', as applied to the pre-school, seem at best ambiguous or at worst a courtesy" (Ashby 1972, p.9). He laid some of the blame on teachers themselves:

> "Pre-school educators, by and large, have failed to articulate the assumptions underpinning their program. Thus they experience difficulties in handling educational theories that reject or drastically modify what they perceive as the traditional view of pre-school education. They have not had available convincing or substantial theories to counter criticism, but have tended to rely on intuitively devised slogans. For example, reference may be made to the 'all-round development of the

> child', 'dealing with the whole child', 'achieving balance between the emotional, social, physical and intellectual needs of the child' and 'not moving in advance of the child's readiness'. Such statements have an evocative ring, but it is by no means clear what they refer to, and how, in practical terms, they might be put into effect. The terms have been given meanings which are only clear to the initiated. People outside the tradition find them irritating, confusing and of doubtful validity" (Ashby 1972, p.5).

Further, he writes of the teacher's problem of identity because the pre-school has been customarily considered somewhat apart from the school system proper. He noted that, "The pre-school teacher has not been able to identify with the infant teacher because of a belief that the latter was 'too formal', and the infant teacher is somewhat uncertain of the value, in educational terms of the pre-school" (Ashby 1972, p.7). Most of these problems remain today. They are not unique to Australia and here, as elsewhere, attempts are being made to overcome the barriers, psychological and physical, that exist between pre-school and primary school. As pre-school education comes to be more widely available and occurs in a variety of settings (e.g. not only in separate centres but buildings attached to schools and through home visiting and correspondence schemes) the current concern expressed by educators with easing children's passage into primary school should demand more serious communication between the two groups of teachers. This process is likely to be accelerated now that most State Education Departments which employ most primary teachers are heavily involved in funding pre-schools and in three States and the two Territories the majority of pre-school centres are their direct responsibility.

VII ABORIGINAL PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

4.60 Programs for Aboriginal children have already been mentioned in the section on Aboriginal Research in Chapter 2 and in earlier paragraphs in this chapter which relate to special provisions

in the States. Commonwealth organisations involved in Aboriginal pre-school education include the Office of Child Care (within the Department of Social Security) and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs provides support for a number of community-based pre-schools, many of which are Aboriginal-managed (Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1980, p.36). The Children's Services Program of the Office of Child Care gives priority to a number of special need categories which include Aboriginal children and their families. The program supports a wide and flexible range of services. The Office of Child Care has established its own Aboriginal Child Care Unit which liaises with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and other Commonwealth Departments and with Aboriginal people in a variety of formal and informal ways. For 1980/81 $925,000 was approved under the Children's Services Program for organisations providing services for Aboriginal children and families. Projects supported by the Commonwealth Government have included:

- the purchase of mini-buses to transport Aboriginal children to pre-school centres
- training programs for Aboriginal pre-school assistants
- advisory services to kindergartens with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Island children
- assistance to Aboriginal pre-schools to help them develop special services
- a research and demonstration project based on pre-school services for Aboriginal children (Department of Social Security 1978, p.34; Office of Child Care 1981, pp.1-3).

4.61 The Office of Child Care together with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Norman Catta Foundation has financed a new building for the Murawina Aborignal children's service complex in Redfern, Sydney. The building, which was opened in October 1980, contains a pre-school and child care centre which caters for 49 Aboriginal children up to 5 years; the upper level consists of a 14-unit hostel which accommodates Aboriginal women, some with young children. In early 1981 the children were cared for by one qualified Aboriginal pre-school teacher, one European teacher, three Aboriginal teacher's assistants, one Aboriginal trainee and one European

mothercraft nurse. The Murawina pre-school program is geared towards Aboriginal culture and has its own Murawina Readers which were produced by Dr Coppell of Macquarie University. Murawina is jointly funded by the Office of Child Care and the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs with supplementary funding from the N.S.W. Department of Youth and Community Services (Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1980, p.36; Smith 1980, p.14; Department of Social Security communication 1981).

VIII PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN A MULTI-CULTURAL AUSTRALIA

4.62 As mentioned earlier some special programs have been developed for migrant children. At the same time, Marjory Ebbeck and Maureen Dyer (1978, p.10) argue that "all children must have a multi-cultural education for them to live in a multi-cultural society". This implies a degree of reciprocity rather than the assumption that migrant children are deficient and in need of special assistance of a compensatory nature. This is not to deny that for non-English-speaking children, attention to the acquisition of adequate English is of the utmost importance. Ebbeck and Dyer (1978, p.10) assert that bilingual programs should provide a means of optimising such children's learning. At all costs, given the importance of language and culture to one's sense of personal worth and identity, the child's first encounter with the education process should acknowledge and accord value to his or her cultural heritage. The writers recognise that, in practice, bilingual programs may not always be possible, especially in areas where a teacher may have in her class children from several ethnic groups. They nonetheless believe that there are ways for a teacher to deal with the situation which should benefit the children and their parents. They suggest that teachers attempt to understand child rearing practices, encourage parents to enter the kindergarten for, say, cooking demonstrations, find books in the children's own languages and encourage parents to read or tell stories and teachers themselves should ensure that their own use of language is consistent and appropriate (Ebbeck & Dyer 1978, p.11).

4.63 An interesting insight - and from the 'ethnic' point of view - into an actual experience involving a Greek-Australian child care centre demonstrates the inherent difficulties when dealing with very young children. K.C. Zervos (1978, p.16) writes that the centre's first predictable problem was in finding staff with appropriate qualifications who were also bilingual. Failing this, there was an attempt to obtain a harmonious mix of monolingual and bilingual staff. It was found that if all staff were accorded the same status regardless of training and experience, the lines of responsibility became blurred and the proper structuring of adequate programs did not occur (Zervos 1978, p.16). On the other hand, with a monolingual English-speaking group leader and bilingual assistants conflicts arose as the assistants felt that Greek language and culture were suppressed and they had little opportunity to express their ideas on caring for the children (Zervos 1978, p.16). An attempt was made to divide the children into several groups according to age and language. There was a Greek-speaking group of 2 to 3½-year-olds, a non-Greek-speaking group for children of the same age and all 3½ to 5-year-olds were taught in English to prepare them for school. The distinctness of the groups proved divisive with English and Greek-speaking staff criticising one another's methods. Transition from one group to another was not proving easy for the children (Zervos 1978, p.17). The solution finally adopted was of appointing bilingual, bicultural group leaders with monolingual or bilingual assistants. This too, has its problems as parents are dubious about the adequacy of the Greek-speaking leaders' English and their lack of familiarity with the Australian school system (Zervos 1978, p.17). Discipline, 'messy' sand and water play and dress have all proved to be areas where cultural differences surfaced (Zervos 1978, pp.18-19).

4.64 In practice, in most Australian pre-schools, especially ones under the auspices of State Education Departments, the situation is more likely to be one of an Anglo-Australian pre-school teacher seeking assistance from parents in the various ethnic communities. Sally Lee (1978) describes a scheme implemented by the Kindergarten Union of South Australia, at the request of the Italian and Greek communities in Adelaide, to supply part-time 'Ethnic Assistants',

usually local mothers. A part-time coordinator was also appointed. This program, which includes the presentation of material in children's own languages and the teaching of English as a second language, appears to have produced some positive results. The children's cultural heritage is given positive recognition, teachers' sensitivity to cultural questions is heightened and communication with parents has improved (Lee 1978, p.14). Most important of all, the children's first experience of an English-speaking institution, which might otherwise be traumatic, has been facilitated (Lee 1978, p.16). As a further outcome, many young mothers who had perhaps migrated to Australia as children and had rejected their cultures, have begun to learn ethnic songs and verses to share with their children. Programs such as this by actively seeking out the ethnic communities and overcoming suspicions can help promote pre-school attendance by non-English-speaking groups which has hitherto been considerably lower than that of English speakers. A survey carried out by the South Australian Education Department (Novick et al, 1975) found that migrant parents wanted children to use their own languages and generally lacked confidence in the ability of the Australian kindergartens to cater for their children's needs. They did not always know under what conditions pre-school education was available and feared their children might be rejected or suffer from discrimination (Lee 1978, pp.13-14).

4.65 In Victoria, in 1978, the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria, with the aid of a grant from the Commonwealth Office of Child Care, set up a Migrant Resource Centre which, through a panel of ethnic consultants advises those working with migrant families in both early childhood education and day care (Waters 1978, p.42). Although lacking the direct involvement in the local community of the Ethnic Assistants program such a Centre would provide a valuable service at lesser cost.

4.66 Dr Marion de Lemos and Mrs Patricia Larsen (1977) have examined the question of pre-school attendance among non-English speakers. Typically, they found that the attendance of children from non-English-speaking backgrounds was less than that of children from

English-speaking backgrounds and this held true for areas of both higher and lower socio-economic status. They postulate several reasons for this which differ somewhat from the reasons put forward by the South Australian Education Department survey mentioned above. First, more migrant than Australian-born mothers work full-time and the hours of sessional pre-schools are inconvenient for them. Second, some migrant parents believe that pre-schools are a form of day care, and therefore unnecessary if either the mother is at home or if someone else is caring for the child. Third, fees are a consideration, especially if parents are already paying a child-minder. Fourth, parents do not perceive the typical activities of the play-oriented Australian pre-school as being an educational experience. Several suggestions are made. They are: the extension of pre-school hours to the normal school day; the provision of day care services with an educational program, specifically a language development program; the attachment of pre-school classes to existing primary schools where the classes would follow normal school hours. The authors point out that the last suggestion in particular would help working mothers, especially if they do not have their own transport and there are older siblings attending the school. It would also lead to more continuity for the child and foster better communication between pre-school and primary teachers. Migrant parents might be more encouraged to send their children to pre-school if it thus appeared to be a genuine component of the educational system. They note that a policy of attaching pre-schools to primary schools is being adopted in South Australia and in Britain (de Lemos & Larsen 1977, pp.6-8). The location of pre-schools on the same sites as primary schools has become a regular occurrence in the A.C.T., Northern Territory, Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland and is also apparent in N.S.W.

4.67 It might be asked, would the extra expenditure be justified in order to ensure that migrant children attend pre-school? Evidence from Australian data is not readily available. The de Lemos and Larsen study, although not employing a large sample, does, however, go some way to indicate the likely positive effects of pre-school education. Among the non-English-speaking group from an

area of lower socio-economic status, those who had attended pre-school scored significantly higher on all of the school readiness tests and on the main achievement tests than those who had not attended. (The differences were not as marked and were not significant for the non-English-speaking group of attenders and non-attenders from an area of higher socio-economic status) (de Lemos & Larsen 1977, p.4). The authors state:

> "While one cannot conclude with any certainty that there is a direct causal relationship between pre-school attendance and school achievement, it is very likely that there is at least an interactive effect operating, such that pre-school attendance optimises the child's opportunities to realise his potential achievement level. This is likely to be particularly true in the case of children from non-English-speaking backgrounds, whose early schooling is likely to be handicapped by language difficulties" (de Lemos & Larsen 1977, p.5).

The study's results suggest that all children, whether English-speaking or not, appear to derive benefits from pre-school attendance, and in particular socially and economically disadvantaged non-English-speaking children may gain considerably from the experience. Therefore it would seem equitable for governments, in addition to providing universal pre-schooling, to acknowledge the need for specific programs directed towards such children.

4.68 The Galbally Report (1978) Migrant Services and Programs, which has been accepted by the Commonwealth Government, examined the needs of young migrant children as one of several groups warranting special attention. The Report recommended that "an extra $.4m be provided through the Office of Child Care to enable the ethnic communities to employ up to twenty-five ethnic children's services workers over the next three years" (para.8.7). The report continues:

> "We have in mind that these workers would be employed by the ethnic groups to work among their own communities in child-care centres and pre-schools to

provide a bridge between the culture of the home and that of the centre or pre-school. Their aim would be to foster multicultural activities in child-care centres and pre-schools; to see that young migrant children are better prepared for school; to encourage participation by individual parents and ethnic groups in the services; to encourage migrant parents in need to seek advice and help on matters relating to young children by encouraging attendance at child education and parenting courses, playgroups etc.; to assist mothers seeking care for the children; and to support migrants caring for children" (para.8.8).

"We feel migrants should be encouraged to help develop and to make use of child-care and pre-school services, so that the multicultural approach can begin as early as possible. We believe this is particularly important in the early settlement stage and see both hostel and community child-care centres having considerable potential in this area. Furthermore, pre-schools should involve migrant mothers in the community through day-to-day pre-school activities" (para.8.9).

4.69 Although, as we have seen, these recommendations are not necessarily easy to implement in practice, they state certain essential principles relating to early childhood education for migrant children which have, moreover, been endorsed by the Commonwealth Government (Australia, House of Representatives 1978, p.2731). These are: that migrant children and their families need special assistance and encouragement to utilise early childhood education facilities; that pre-school education can be a vehicle to develop understanding in a multi-cultural community; that early childhood educational experience can and should help prepare children for school.

4.70 The fact that these ethnic children's services workers will also be concerned with providing advice on day care for the

children of working parents may go some way towards helping such parents overcome the sorts of problems mentioned by de Lemos and Larsen. To take one example, in consultation with local pre-school authorities, the workers might assist parents, child care centres and private child minders in devising practical strategies for encouraging children's attendance at pre-school facilities e.g., through cooperative transport schemes. Such programs, if given the necessary resources, might well have a bearing not only on the successful settlement of migrant families but also on the educational development of future generations.

4.71 Recently the Department of Social Security (1981) reported:

> "Since the tabling of the Galbally Report in May 1978, 39 full-time positions of Ethnic Children's Services Workers (ECSW) have been approved for funding under the Children's Services Program administered by the Department of Social Security. These positions are in addition to earlier approvals of positions having duties similar to that of ECSWs. Applications for those positions were received following the publication of the Galbally Report and by organisations responding to Galbally. The duties of ECSWs are broadly similar to the functions outlined in para.8.8 of the Galbally Report, although some minor variations may exist due to varying interpretations of ethnic-based and ethnic-oriented positions of their needs and priorities in service delivery. In summary, these workers act as a bridge between the migrants culture and the wider Australian society and assist in meeting the needs of migrant communities in child care, including their need for a multi-cultural experience in pre-schooling."

IX FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Introduction

4.72 This section is basically a study of the aftermath of the Fry Report (full title: Care and education of young children: Report of the Australian Pre-Schools Committee) which was tabled in the Australian Federal Parliament in November 1973. The Fry Report, as requested in February 1973, suggested programs for the Federal Government which would require it to play an expanded role in the provision of pre-school education and child care services in Australia. However, there were unforeseen developments and unexpected reactions which followed the Report. As a result of these, further reports, with different terms of reference, were requested. There was continuing disagreement concerning administration - with regard to Departmental responsibility, clientele, kinds of services and career background of administrators. The large amounts of proposed expenditure were queried.

4.73 Attention is focussed on the period up to the establishment of the Office of Child Care in June 1976. The section will consider political and social setting, interest groups, ideologies, issues and media coverage. Although much of this is now in the past, many of the contributing forces are still with us and need to be taken into account in considering the future of early childhood services.

The Pre-school Education Movement

4.74 By the time the Labor Government commenced office in December 1972 a number of forces had arisen to encourage more Federal involvement in pre-school education and child care. The proportion of women in the workforce had been rising. In 1961 12.5 per cent of the workforce were married women compared to 19.6 in 1972 (the Fry Report 1974, p.158). Hence there were large numbers of working mothers who

had children of pre-school age in need of care. In 1974 it was noted that, "There are at present about 1.3 million children of pre-school age. For more than one in four of these children, there is no parent at home during working hours. Of these only one in every 10 attends a child care centre" (ALP Policy Speech 1974). The States and Territories were very unequal in their distribution of services. It was observed that:

> "by 1970, sessional pre-school care ... was only available for 52 per cent of the pre-school age population (three- to five-year olds) in the A.C.T., 29 per cent in Victoria, 17 per cent in South Australia, 13 per cent in Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania, and only 3 per cent in New South Wales. For other children, parents made arrangements with relatives or neighbours, or resorted to private profit-making child-care centres where the weekly rates are often astronomical" (Spearritt 1977, p.201).

4.75 Hence the feeling that something had to be done. The initial approach was influenced by a number of assumptions. The ideas that began the U.S. Head Start movement were still prevalent, e.g. the early childhood years are the most important for intellectual, social and emotional development; the solution for children who begin school retarded in their development (and consequently fall further behind the longer they are at school) is to overcome the retardation at the pre-school stage. While it was acknowledged that full-day child care centres were often necessary for the children of single and/or working parents, especially those experiencing economic hardship, it also seems to have been assumed that the most desirable expansion of children's services would be in the field of pre-school education. Pre-school education here is understood to be on a sessional basis (e.g. three to five half-days a week) and is therefore most suitably geared for the children of mothers out of the workforce. Another

assumption was that in the past there had been unnecessary duplication of resources in keeping child care and pre-school education separate - hence the need to combine these services wherever possible.

4.76 This is the background to the setting up of the Australian Pre-Schools Committee with its brief to make recommendations that would lead within six years to access to pre-school education (following the Canberra model of three half-days a week) for all four-year-olds in Australia as well as day care centres for the disadvantaged. The APC (under the chairmanship of Miss Joan Fry) found that a major stumbling block to the rapid expansion of services was the need to maintain quality, in particular to have sufficient numbers of qualified pre-school teachers. Thus they chose to recommend that the development of resources be spread over a twelve-year period. Programs were recommended so that by 1985 there would be pre-school education for 70 per cent of all four-year-olds and day care centres (with a pre-school education component) for 10 per cent of all pre-school children. It was recommended that the Government instrumentality to administer these programs, initially proposed as the Australian Pre-Schools Commission, be the responsibility of the Minister for Education (under whom the Committee was established). The educational emphasis in these programs very much reflects the background of the nine members of the Australian Pre-Schools Committee - three from Government Education Departments, four from tertiary education institutions associated with teacher education and/or child development, one from the Australian Pre-school Association.

The Child Care Movement

4.77 At the same time there were forces in motion that led to the Federal Government operating in a quite different framework from that outlined by the Fry Report. Initally the major reaction came from the women's movement, most notably represented by the Women's Electoral Lobby. The movement argued that women should not be compelled to be house-bound with their children but instead should be able to join the workforce if they so choose. Adequate full-day child care centres would allow some scope for genuine freedom of choice.

This argument was reinforced by the fact that an increasing proportion of married women were in the workforce, including the mothers of children under the age of six years. There was also the conviction that this trend would have been more marked if there had been a greater number of places available at child care centres (e.g. see Cox 1971, p.19).

4.78 For many people the idea of pre-school education did not have totally acceptable connotations. There seemed to them to be the danger of school being foisted onto younger children who were not ready emotionally or intellectually for formal, structured lessons that may involve drilling and rote learning. Most parents in Australia today have probably not experienced pre-school education themselves because of its limited availability until recently. Many of them have been surprised to learn that the education in an average pre-school is usually informal and unstructured and very much involves free play, relatively free movement and adequate periods for rest.

4.79 On the other hand many of those who are aware of what is happening probably feel that specialised professional qualifications are not necessary for looking after children in such settings. They would probably see the management of such children's activities as very much akin to what any mother does with young children of her own in the home. There have also been doubts about how much the disadvantaged can gain from pre-schools. The Priorities Review Staff stated that, "Sessional pre-schooling is currently more popular with middle-class parents of those children already more advantaged in our society" (Appendix I, p.4). The Social Welfare Commission Report, to be discussed later, argued that the traditional pre-school program was geared to the abilities and needs of non-educationally disadvantaged children (1974, P.27). In writing about the English pre-school scene, which has very much influenced developments in Australia, Bernstein (1975) noted an 'invisible' pedagogy of the nursery school which originated within a section of the middle-class. This pedagogy is thought disadvantageous to working-class children because their families lack such back-up procedures as, "an elaborated code of communication, a mother who provides access to symbolic form and is

acting as a crucial agent of cultural reproduction, and educational support systems which include the mother's own efforts to help her child master the basic skills when necessary" (Tizard 1975, p.60). (In the United States the reaction has been to try out "compensatory" programs for "culturally deprived" children with some use of formal structured learning designed for younger age groups; in Australia there have been attempts to involve adults from the same cultural backgrounds as the children, e.g. migrants, Aboriginals.)

4.80 Lone parents of low socio-economic status who work have additional disadvantages with regard to early childhood care and education - the part-day sessional pre-school often does not provide enough hours for their children, day care is often inaccessible, if accessible it is often prohibitively expensive and if parent involvement is required the working parent is often too busy to fully participate. (Such parent involvement may include organising and campaigning for the setting up of a centre, participating in administration, occasional visits to the centre to assist staff etc.) Disadvantaged groups usually lack experience at forming articulate pressure groups in order to achieve the kind of children's services they would prefer.

4.81 In short it appears there are serious obstacles in the way of achieving a national consensus on the provisior of early childhood care and education. This proved to be the case in 1973. In the middle of 1973 (also mid-way through the APC's work on its report) the Australian Labor Party changed its policy on early childhood so that there was an increased emphasis on child care and provisions for the disadvantaged. Supporters of the women's movement were particularly involved in this, acting as a counterweight to other interest groups in favour of pre-school education.

4.82 The differences in views were expressed with some intensity. After all both groups were advocating different programs for young children which reflected different sets of values and assumptions about what was "best" for children. For many the ideal has been the mother at home providing a warm, loving and responsive

relationship that would maximise physical, intellectual and emotional growth. For them a likely contrast was a working mother whose young child suffered from neglect and emotional deprivation. On the other hand many working mothers would see their children as being enriched by the socialising experiences and special facilities of good quality child care centres. They would feel that their work experience would assist in them becoming more fulfilled and happier individuals. They would consequently be able to relate better to their own children and provide better models for their children to imitate and learn from. For them a possible contrast would be an unhappy frustrated house-bound mother providing a poor emotional climate for her child and unable to develop her own individuality because of being absorbed in attending to the rest of her family.

4.83 The change in ALP policy was not accompanied by a change in the terms of reference for the Australian Pre-Schools Committee. Instead, the Federal Labor Government decided to commission further reports. This led to the Social Welfare Commission (SWC) Report (written with wider terms of reference) which was tabled in Parliament on 30 July 1974 and the report of the Priorities Review Staff which reviewed the Fry Report and the SWC Report. The SWC Report recommended programs that would extend to 580,000 pre-school children by 1980, i.e. 38 per cent of children under school age. For 1980 the number of pre-school children for each service was to be: 175,000 in pre-schools; 108,000 in day care; 30,000 in family day care; 100,000 in play-groups; 75,000 in toddlers groups; 32,000 in other day care; 60,000 in other care (Social Welfare Commission 1974, p.178). Funding was to be through the States to local government authorities. Allocation of funds was to be according to an area's socio-economic level. Local government areas could employ people to act as catalysts for the identification of early childhood needs.

4.84 The SWC recommended that the Department of Social Security administer early childhood services. It also recommended that $885 million be spent by the Federal Government on child care and pre-schooling for the period 1974 to 1980 (this amount included teacher training). For about the same period (January 1974 to June

1980) the Fry Report had recommended $318.5 million to be followed by an additional $489 million in the subsequent period up to June 1985. (The Fry Report estimates did not include teacher training costs; the SWC estimated training costs to range from $4.5 million in 1974-75 to $10 million in 1979-80.) The SWC appeared to have in mind annual amounts in the order of the $191.5 million recommended for 1979-80 continuing on until 1985. Cost estimates by others have also proved to be substantial. In the debate on the Children's Commission Bill 1975, Senator Rae said, "Maintenance of a child in a centre costs in excess of $1000 a year. The capital cost for each child for the establishment of the traditional child care centre is something approaching $3000. These figures probably are a little out of date" (Rae 1975, p.1917). The possibility was raised of paying $20 per week to all non-working mothers of children less than six years old. The Department of Social Security estimated that in 1973 this would have cost $660 million (Mahoney & Barnaby 1973, p.10). The Social Welfare Commission (1974, p.219) noted, "The cost of the program would probably be much higher than this as a payment of this magnitude would undoubtedly encourage women to leave the workforce".

4.85 At the time of the reports in 1973-74 the idea of economic downturn and restriction of increases in government spending to curb inflation was not as important as it was to become in limiting expenditure. The limited availability of Federal funds, with the accompanying need to determine priorities with special consideration for disadvantaged groups, was to eventually have a very substantial effect in shaping the role of the Federal Government in the provision of early childhood care and education.

4.86 The Report of the Priorities Review Staff did not fully accept either of the earlier reports. It stated that the Fry Report was too biased to pre-schooling, did not ensure top priority for the needy and that 10 per cent of pre-school children in child care centres by 1985 was not enough. The Priorities Review Staff also stated that pre-school education does not help workforce participants and that the Fry Report showed unnecessary concern with professionalism. (The Fry Report proposed a staffing structure of professional,

certificate-level support staff and untrained staff - the professionals receiving more advanced tertiary training than the support staff who would need at least ten years of schooling prior to two years of further training. The ratio would be two professionals to one certificate holder. For pre-schools and child care centres the ratio was to be one trained staff member to one aide and overall, allowing for family day care, three-quarters of the staff recruited would be without special training. The SWC gave less emphasis to professionalism. It proposed a staff structure that would operate at the professional, service delivery and operational level, with each pre-school teacher to service five centres and with some in-service training for operational staff.)

4.87 The Priorities Review Staff accepted most of the SWC recommendations. However the PRS Report objected to the recommendation that local governments be the main administrative agency, "Because the quality and capacity of local government as an administrative agency varies very greatly from place to place, total reliance on administration through local government is not advisable" (p.3). The PRS felt that the administration of early childhood services had suffered in Australia because of administration by departments with vested interests in particular types of services. The PRS therefore recommended that ministerial responsibility for early childhood services be assigned to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the Special Minister of State.

Areas of Disagreement.

4.88 All this disagreement no doubt placed the Federal Government in an unenviable position. It was committed to major initiatives but many of the initiatives available were likely to arouse strong objections from various interest groups. The recommendations of the Fry Report were made in accordance with the APC's terms of reference. These emphasised pre-school education and remained unchanged despite the change in ALP policy on early childhood after the setting up of the APC. The Committee members were only part-time and found there was insufficient time "to obtain information, to consult with people in all States, to develop a sound

basis for action, and to fashion a Report likely to command respect from both professionals and laymen" (the Fry Report 1974, p.2). A key problem was lack of comprehensive and consistently-based statistical information. Much of the debate has been over how many pre-school children are in need of the different forms of child care - in particular in need of child care centres.

4.89 The Fry Report was written with the idea of having follow-up discussion. From the press coverage it appears that this discussion was rather minimal and did not get to the stage of trying to reconcile opposing points of view. Perhaps the difficulty was partly that opposing points of view were based on ideology so that a whole set of notions were either strongly supported or strongly opposed because of beliefs in certain values. There were references to bureaucratic infighting for control of children's services. Examples of the coverage follow:

- "The Federal Government is coming under increasing, bitter criticism from women's organisations - and notably the Labor Women's Conference - over its policies on child care" (Yvonne Preston, July 1973).

- "the plans of the pre-schools committee are under strong attack from inside and outside Government.
  The committee's report has led to a sharp battle between the Education Department and the Social Welfare Commission as to who is to set future guidelines for child care - a struggle marked by political infighting, rumours and innuendoes" (Michelle Grattan, February 1974).

- "It (Cabinet's decision to ask the Social Welfare Commission for a report) comes after severe criticism of a report on pre-schooling and child care prepared for the Government by the Australian pre-schools committee, headed by Miss Joan Fry" ('Cabinet asks for child care review', February 1974).

4.90 There are references to "the mothers versus the educationists at football" and the "fracas over child-care and

pre-schooling" (Dany Humphreys, April 1974), "21 months of external and internal brawls" (P. Manning, October 1974) and "infighting between Education and Social Security" (P. Spearritt 1977, p.207). Spearritt (1977, p.211) continues the conflict theme with:

> "The vested interests, especially the Australian Pre-School Association and the Kindergarten Unions, were not inert: at the end of 1975, they were at least the temporary victors. Moreover, most state governments had taken the side of the pre-schools. But the creation of an Office of Child Care in June 1976 was a victory for the other side. The battle is not yet over."

Probably the overall cause of early childhood services was not assisted by this apparent conflict. This type of situation has occurred in other countries and there will be further discussion later on what happened in the United States.

4.91 Some of the points made about maintaining standards and the need for professional staff must have been found provocative by those with different viewpoints, e.g.

- "The Committee is emphatic that the needs of young children in early childhood services require high-quality, well-trained staff; it is concerned to dispel the myth that the needs of such can be adequately met by merely warm-hearted people who are fond of children" (the Fry Report 1974, p.1).

4.92 Teacher preparation is discussed in para.2.75 in the research chapter of this document. It mentions a recent U.S. study showing that care-givers, who have studied in child-related fields, are likely to work with children who produce higher test score gains. These care-givers make more use of questioning, responding, instructing, praising and comforting. But it is the subject matter studied rather than the number of years of formal education which makes the difference (Weiss 1978). So that to some extent it is an open question as to just how much preparation is required to produce effective educators for pre-school children. This is a key issue because the higher the qualifications the more teachers have to be

paid. Since salaries are a major component of total expenditure on children's services this has implications for the number of children who can be catered for, given that only a limited amount of government funds are available and that there are maximum child/staff ratios. (Until the 1970s pre-school teachers had been paid at levels well below those of primary and secondary teachers.)

4.93 Various doubts have been raised by one side about the other. After the setting up of the Australian Pre-Schools Committee there were charges of insufficient knowledge in the Federal sphere about child care, lack of consumer representation and over-emphasis on the "traditionalist institutionalised educationist's approach" (Yvonne Preston, July 1973; see also P. Manning, October 1974). On the other hand some doubts were raised about how much the articulate women's groups were representative of the wider community. It was suggested that the women's movement was making mothers "feel guilty and incompetent for not wanting to work while the children are minded all day" (Lady (Vincent) Fairfax, February 1974).

Federal Government Initiatives

4.94 The Australian Federal Government's attempts to expand its role in early childhood services took place in the setting described above. One of the Government's first moves was to allocate $5 million in the 1972 Budget for child care centres. In October 1972 "a Child Care Act was introduced, providing $23 million over three years in unmatched capital and recurrent grants to non-profit organisations for child care centres and $1 million for research. The scheme aimed to expand child-minding facilities by 20 per cent" (Spearritt 1977, p.204). In November 1972 during the election campaign, ALP leader Mr Whitlam promised to make pre-school education available to every Australian child for an annual expenditure of $40 million over six years (Spearritt 1977, p.204). In January 1973 it was announced that special scholarships for trainee pre-school teachers and grants to training colleges had been introduced. These grants were expected to cost $1.5 million for the 1972-73 financial year and to affect more than 1700 pre-school teachers (Department of Education 1973, p.1).

4.95 The Australian Pre-Schools Committee was set up in February 1973. The then Minister for Education, Mr Beazley, informed this Committee in the following month, "Your elevation in due course to a statutory body will, I believe, take place without controversy in the Parliament" (Beazley 1973b, p.3). The Child Care Act 1972 was introduced by the Department of Labour. After being transferred to the Department of Education the administration of the Child Care Act commenced in April 1973. This was accompanied by the appointment of the Child Care Standards Committee and the Child Care Research Grants Committee (the latter under the chairmanship of Professor W.B. Macdonald). The Act allowed for up to 100 per cent of capital costs of land, building and equipment and also for recurrent assistance for certain qualified staff and special needs of children (Coleman 1976, p.11).

4.96 In April 1974 the Interim Pre-School and Child Care Services Program was approved:

> "This program introduced Commonwealth recurrent assistance for pre-schools in the States. The basis of that assistance was, in broad terms, the difference between State grants and the award salary of staff in existing pre-schools working with children in the one year before school entry, and 100% of salary of staff in pre-schools established with Commonwealth capital grants. Other recurrent support was also introduced for pre-school services for handicapped and isolated children, for advisors for pre-school kindergarten services, and for some family day care schemes" (Coleman 1976, p.11).

This program had been approved by an interdepartmental committee representing the Social Welfare Commission, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Treasury and the Department of Education.

4.97 On 19 September 1974 a major statement was issued on the establishment of a Children's Commission (the Australian Pre-Schools Committee had been disbanded). Until this Commission was established there was to be an Interim Committee for the Children's Commission

which would administer pre-school and child care schemes. This area was to be the responsibility of the Special Minister of State, Mr Lionel Bowen. Mr Bowen stated that there should be no rigid distinction between educating children and caring for them. The Committee's task would be to stimulate a wide range of services including full day care, family day care, play-groups, before- and after-school care, holiday care, occasional and emergency care and early childhood education. The emphasis was to be on areas of need. It was acknowledged that up until then pre-schooling had primarily benefited children whose mothers could afford to stay at home. The Government wished to direct more assistance to where there were small relatively informal arrangements - these involved the most commonly used child-minding resources, i.e. relatives, friends and neighbours (Bowen 1974, pp.1250-1).

4.98 The Interim Committee comprised four full-time members: the Chairman, Mr Tony Ayers (a senior public servant), Miss Joan Fry, Ms Trisha Kavanagh (Welfare Officer with the Australian Workers' Union in Sydney) and Mrs Barbara Spalding (coordinator of Family Day Care with the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Fitzroy) (Bowen 1974, pp.1248-9). There were seven part-time members. In late 1974 Consultative Committees were established in each State. These Committees represented a wide range of interests and their activities involved consideration and recommendation of applications for grants for projects and services (Coleman 1976, p.12). Consultative committees established in the States represented Departments of Health, Education and Welfare, as well as community groups nominated by the States and agreed to by the Commonwealth.

4.99 While early childhood services involved large amounts of expenditure they were not as large as those proposed by the commissioned reports mentioned earlier. From 1972-73 to 1975-76 the Commonwealth spent $118.5 million under the children's services program. (The Children's Services Program provides a range of services for pre-school aged children, for children at school, for adolescents and for families.) Senator Guilfoyle (1976b, p.1301) noted that the majority of this was used to support pre-schools. In

1972-73 the Government spent an estimated $300,000 on pre-schools and child-care; by 1973-74, this had increased to $8.97 million and in 1974-75, $45.23 million. Eighty-two per cent of funds in 1974-75 went to pre-schools (Spearritt 1977, pp.208-209; Guilfoyle 1976a, p.2; Department of Social Security, 1981). Spearritt writes, "This distribution of funds was a tribute to the lobbying power of the Australian Pre-School Association and organisations such as the Kindergarten Unions. No such subsidies were offered to child-care centres, nor were there any powerful lobby groups active on their behalf" (Spearritt 1977, p.209).

4.100 There were significant fluctuations in the amount of funds allocated to early childhood. After the tabling of the Social Welfare Commission Report on 30 July 1974 the Government promised additional funds, to bring the allocation to $90 million. The amount was cut back to $75 million by the end of August (Spearritt 1977, p.207). In February 1976, the Interim Children's Committee 1975-76 budget of $74 million was cut by $9 million (Spearritt 1977, p.210).

4.101 Attention was drawn to the concentration of finance on pre-schools. In July 1974 it was pointed out that 20 child-care centres were being funded under the existing scheme compared with more than 140 pre-schools (Preston 1974, p.10). Senator Guilfoyle noted that for December 1975 it was estimated that there were 163,250 pre-school places under the children's services program compared with 8,188 full day care places and 2,725 family day care places funded by the Commonwealth Government (Guilfoyle 1976 b, p.1301). (Certain groups had been better equipped than others to respond quickly to Government demands to provide submissions within periods of about three months.)

4.102 Not surprisingly the administration of early childhood services came under review. The Bill to establish a Children's Commission passed both Houses of Parliament and received Royal Assent on 11 June 1975, but the Bill was never proclaimed. The Labor Government was defeated at the end of 1975 and in early June 1976 the coalition Government announced that instead of a Children's Commission

there would be an Office of Child Care within the Social Security Department. (The Office is headed by Mrs Marie Coleman, former chairman of the disbanded Social Welfare Commission.) The Office would provide policy advice on children's services and administer the children's services program (involving full-day care, occasional and emergency care, outside school hours and holiday care and pre-schooling). It would aim to give particular attention to "the child care needs of single parent families, low income families, migrant and Aboriginal families and other children with particular requirements, such as geographically isolated children and handicapped children" (Guilfoyle 1976b, p.1301). A major administrative change concerned the recurrent funding arrangements for pre-schools as from 1 January 1977. Instead of funds to pay a major percentage of salaries of agreed pre-school staff the assistance was to be provided to the States in block grants (Coleman 1976, p.12).

Parallel U.S. Experiences

4.103 The Australian experience with early childhood services parallels U.S. developments in the late 1960s. There was the same problem of introducing new Federal programs without having them modified to accord with the set procedures of already established Government bodies. There was the same intense rivalry and competition between different groups and administrative organisations. In the U.S. it began with the 1969 plan to transfer Head Start from the Office of Economic Opportunity. A transfer to the existing Children's Bureau was not favoured because it was regarded as not innovative and not especially concerned with the disadvantaged. Possible areas for transfer were thought to be influenced by special interest groups such as professional educators in the Office of Education, professional social workers in the Children's Bureau and administrators of custodial care in the Social and Rehabilitation Service.

4.104 Hence the proposal for a new agency, the Office of Child Development (OCD), to look after Head Start and day care programs supported by the Children's Bureau. Jule Sugarman, with a background in Head Start, was appointed acting director of the OCD but there were objections to his permanent appointment from the child welfare

professionals. He was replaced by Edward Zigler and the OCD was to be organised into three bureaus - the Bureau of Head Start and Early Childhood, the Children's Bureau and the Bureau of Program Development and Resources. Steiner (1976, p.45) concludes, "Without unified responsibility, there was little likelihood of moving all such child care into conformity with Head Start's low child-adult ratios; comprehensiveness, including education, nutrition, and health; and parent involvement".

4.105 In the U.S. of the late 1960s there was a multitude of independent child care programs receiving Federal money. In order to coordinate these programs a Federal Interagency Panel of Early Childhood was set up in 1968. But the serious matters were apparently too divisive to permit coordination and most attention was paid to coordinating matters of little importance. Consequently local workers in children's programs felt there was no help and commitment from central authorities (Steiner 1976, p.52).

4.106 Reviewing the U.S. situation, Steiner (1976, p.241) observes:

- "Children's issues are too often the province of social reformers and child-welfare workers whose support for an increased public role in children's lives invariably shows enthusiasm, compassion, and a sense of mission but is less frequently accompanied by specific and tested plans for implementing their goals."

- "Discussing the activities of the coalition that came together to draft a comprehensive child development bill in 1971, Marian Edelman reports that welfare mothers and middle-class women 'almost came to blows'. ... it underlines an old and still unresolved dilemma: efforts to set priorities inevitably weaken a coalition; failure to set priorities reduces the responsiveness of policy makers."

4.107 The above U.S. administrative wrangling has occurred in a social setting similar to that in Australia. In the U.S. more women

206

and mothers have been entering the workforce, there are increasing numbers of lone parents and more children are being born to women in established careers - hence a likely increase in the demand for child care (Grubb and Lazerson 1978, p.284). It has been estimated that there are six million children under the age of six with working mothers while there are only one million licensed day care places (Joffe 1977, p.x).

4.108 The 1971 U.S. Comprehensive Child Development Bill was vetoed by the President because it was said to go against a family-centred approach (Joffe 1977, p.ix). The Comprehensive Child and Family Services Act of 1975 collapsed partly because it was portrayed as under-cutting family life (Grubb and Lazerson 1978, p.284). Joffe feels that recent U.S. efforts to secure child care legislation have been met by an unusually vitriolic and anonymous smear campaign (Joffe 1977, p.x).

4.109 Like Australia the U.S. also has various interest groups competing with one other. Joffe (1977, p.xi) suggests that if Federal funds for new pre-school programs suddenly became available there would be a major struggle between the American Federation of Teachers and its allies and a coalition of other professional and community groups: "The AFT argues that exclusive control of new programs should be given to the public schools; opponents want to preserve and promote more diversified sponsorship". The longer established clientele for child care services has been drawn largely from the middle- and upper-classes; the new clients, often with disadvantaged backgrounds, are strongly linked to compensatory education (Joffe 1977, pp.133-5). The latter group are associated with a redirection of effort away from the traditional nursery program to a more cognitive approach (Joffe 1977, p.138). Professional educators have at times been at odds with the public who have tended to see the rhetoric about "social and emotional enrichment" as "too much like glorified babysitting" (Joffe 1977, pp.135-6).

X SUMMARY

4.110 Pre-school education has its origins in the work of philanthropic and voluntary organisations concerned with the health and education of young children - both have been concerned with children of the poor and the latter also with upper-middle and middle-class children. Hence the limited government activity in this area and the limited provisions for "average" children until recently and the subsequent involvement of health and welfare as well as educational authorities.

4.111 Voluntary organisations have played a large role in the provision of pre-school education e.g. the South Australian Kindergarten Union, the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland and the N.S.W. Kindergarten Union. State Education Departments have become increasingly involved in pre-school education - most notably in Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia. Except for Victoria, all States and Territories have educational authorities with at least some responsibility for pre-school education although this responsibility is relatively small-scale in N.S.W.. It is not uncommon to have pre-schools located on the same sites as primary schools; this has become a regular occurrence in the A.C.T., Northern Territory, Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland and is also apparent in N.S.W.

4.112 Australian pre-school services have expanded considerably since 1966 and especially since 1973. The proportion of children aged 3-5 years attending pre-school in Australia was a mere 8 per cent in 1966. By 1977 80 per cent or more of children in the year prior to school entry were enrolled in three States and the two Territories. Two other States were not far below this level. The most marked increases in pre-schools in the period 1973-1978 have occurred in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria. Unfortunately there are difficulties in the availability and comparability of statistical data on pre-school attendance.

4.113 The States and Territories have shown increasing concern with the needs of special groups of pre-school children. Enrolments of Aboriginal pre-school children have risen. In 1979 there were over 200 Aboriginal pre-school assistants in Australia whose salaries were financed by grants from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1979, p.36). All mainland States and the Northern Territory employ Aboriginal staff as part of a special program. Special programs for isolated children include correspondence programs (Qld, W.A. and N.T.), radio programs (W.A. and N.T.) and mobile classrooms (N.S.W., Qld, S.A., W.A., Tas. and A.C.T.). The encouragement of the Commonwealth Government has helped the development of more integrated services e.g. the Early Child Development Complexes in Victoria and the Integrated Service Centres in South Australia.

4.114 Australian pre-schools generally offer programs on a part-day basis for 41-42 weeks of the year to children four years of age. Usually there is one qualified teacher and one aide for each group of approximately 25 children. Parent involvement is usually in the form of mothers assigned to a roster for performing routine domestic tasks. Pre-school teachers generally favour the "traditional" free play program with emphasis on children's social and emotional development through creative activities. Heavily structured or formal curricula are widely considered as unsuitable. There are problems in finding extra staff and resources for special groups in need such as Aboriginal, non-English-speaking migrants and physically handicapped children.

4.115 Although training colleges for kindergarten teachers have been established in Australia since the early part of this century, it has only been since 1968 that the Commonwealth Government has provided them with funding - initially in the form of capital grants and later in 1973 recurrent grants became available. Courses in early childhood education have been substantially increased in recent years and are now offered in various universities, colleges of advanced education and colleges of technical and further education. These developments have been accompanied by problems in obtaining staff with suitable

qualifications for tertiary institutions. Although their period of training was already three years by 1943, pre-school teachers were disadvantaged by low pay until the early 1970s when salaries were awarded in some States that were the equivalent to those of other teachers. Men are now being encouraged to become pre-school teachers. Australian pre-school educators have been seen as insufficiently equipped to think beyond the traditional approach to pre-school education. More serious communication between pre-school and primary teachers seems likely in the future.

4.116 While bilingual programs may not always be possible, allowance can be made for a migrant child's cultural heritage in order to preserve a sense of personal worth and identity, e g. with teachers understanding migrant child rearing practices, parent involvement ranging from cooking demonstrations to reading to children in their own language, teachers using language appropriately. There may be difficulties in obtaining a harmonious mix of monolingual and bilingual staff from different cultures in a bilingual school, especially in terms of lines of responsibility. The attendance of school children from non-English-speaking backgrounds has been found to be less than that of children from English-speaking backgrounds. Reasons postulated include, 1) more migrant mothers work full-time and find pre-school hours unsuitable, 2) fees, 3) the typical play-oriented Australian pre-school is not seen as educational. Hence the suggestions of extended pre-school hours, language development programs and attachment of pre-school classes to existing primary schools. The Galbally Report has recommended funds for ethnic communities to employ ethnic children's services workers. These workers could provide a bridge between the culture of the home and that of the child care centre or pre-school.

4.117 The basic problem for the Australian Federal Government in becoming involved in early childhood services has been to formulate programs on the basis of national consensus. By mid-1974 the Government had commissioned and received three reports with different terms of reference and different recommendations on early childhood education and care. The Fry Report recommended the availability of

pre-school education for 70 per cent of four-year-olds, child care for 10 per cent of all pre-school children, steps to ensure sufficient numbers of professionally qualified staff and the Australian Pre-Schools Commission to operate under the portfolio of the Minister for Education. The Social Welfare Commission Report, with broader terms of reference, recommended a wider range of services that would emphasise child care and would cater for 38 per cent of children under school age; staff qualifications were assigned less weight, local governments were to be involved in administration and the Federal administrative body would be part of the Department of Social Security. The Priorities Review Staff largely supported the Social Welfare Commission on clientele and staff qualifications, disagreed about local government involvement and opted for administration by a Federal Department without "vested interests".

4.118 The proposed Australian Pre-Schools Commission was never established and neither was the Children's Commission. Eventually the Interim Committee for the Children's Commission, responsible to the Special Minister of State, was replaced by the Office of Child Care attached to the Department of Social Security. While all this was happening the press coverage presented a picture of bureaucratic wrangling, interest groups competing against one another and disagreement over staff qualifications and the nature of the demand for children's services. There were setbacks in the Federal Government's attempts to direct a greater proportion of early childhood funds to disadvantaged groups. While the Federal Government became more oriented to the provision of child care the States and Territories (other than N.S.W.) have continued with a different approach.

4.119 Part of the early childhood movement in Australia has probably been influenced by the U.S. Project Head Start and it is therefore not surprising that some of what happened in Australia paralleled earlier developments in the U.S. such as the disagreement over which Federal body should administer Head Start, problems of coordination, rival interest groups, concern about threats to family child rearing, rivalry between educators and social workers.

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Chapter 5 - POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

5.1 This document emphasises the changing state of pre-school education. Pre-school education has become more widespread. There have been attempts to respond to the arguments for more coordination in the provision of services for young children. A variety of methods have been tried out to cater for the needs of special groups. Certain trends are evident with regard to social change, education, government initiatives and research. Some of these trends have implications for professionals and government agencies. Unfortunately not all of the implications for pre-school education are clear-cut.

5.2 The strong demand for early childhood services, including pre-school education, looks as if it will continue and possibly increase. Much of this demand can be attributed to more mothers in the workforce, also more mothers working part-time. Some of the demand comes from moves to assist the social, emotional and intellectual development of disadvantaged children.

5.3 The current restrictions on government spending will mean more emphasis on allocation of scarce resources to areas of special need - to migrant pre-school children, Aboriginals, the handicapped and the poor etc. More information on special need will be required - the nature of the need, the numbers involved, where they are located and how they may be best assisted. A welfare approach here will need to be carefully organised. Otherwise the danger is that a poor service will be created for the poor (see para. 3.66) and the recipients of this service will be stigmatised.

5.4 Support for the integration and coordination of services is likely to continue as are the accompanying problems and difficulties. Such integration and coordination will benefit from better planning and with more reasonable goals which do not conflict with one another. There is likely to be more cooperation from professionals and organisations if their status and/or survival is not threatened.

5.5 Education will continue to play an important role in early childhood services. Most of the Australian States and Territories have Departments of Education very much concerned with pre-school education. Overall they have made a large contribution to the expansion of pre-school education in Australia since 1973. Various arguments have been raised in support of such involvement. Joffe has argued for the delivery of early childhood services through the school on the grounds that an enrichment approach could be applied, the target population would be universal, there would be a destigmatisation of services and it would be possible to maintain higher and uniform standards, e.g. teacher-child ratios and physical facilities (Joffe 1977, p.142). The Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia, while allowing for the importance of voluntary effort, also noted the advantages of having kindergartens run by the Education Department: the Department is able to identify areas where: 1) there are children of below average ability at school entry; 2) there are a high proportion of children from non-English-speaking homes and from single parent families; 3) there is poverty; 4) parents are less well-educated; and 5) families are qualified for welfare assistance. The Department is in a favourable position to devise specific programs for underprivileged children (Karmel 1971, p.267).

5.6 Because of the declining birth-rate, Education Departments will be faced with declining school enrolments, a rising over-supply of teachers and an excess capacity in many schools. The Departments may be encouraged by this situation to give further attention to the development of pre-school education. Already there are increasing links between pre-schools and primary schools e.g. with pre-schools now tending to be located near or on the same sites as primary schools. These links are being assisted by recent developments in teacher training. Dr Plummer (1979, p.203) has noted a trend here towards formal education with more tertiary students now being trained in early childhood education (aimed at children from three to eight years of age) rather than in pre-school education. There are pre-schools which have extended their hours to the same as for school.

5.7 Other educational developments include a rise in the number of male pre-school teachers. Knowledge of language and cognitive development is being used more in the design of structured programs for pre-school children. Home involvement and parent participation are still being seriously explored. While home visitors have very much helped parents provide educational experiences for their children there are some doubts about the value of these programs. However there are still other programs for parent education which look promising.

5.8 Major research breakthroughs which would substantially benefit pre-school education do not seem to be likely in the near future. More attention is needed to quality rather than quantity and there is a special need to develop fundamental research tools and techniques. In order for administrative organisations to administer effectively much more data needs to be gathered on the extent of present services and on the children served. This will probably mean more government monitoring of private centres. Finally, it is possible that there are a number of different programs presently being undertaken which could be used more widely. A concerted effort to adequately evaluate these programs could lead to findings that would encourage more widespread use of successful programs.

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GLOSSARY

(Generally the definitions below are those used or implied by authors cited in this document; they do not necessarily apply elsewhere.)

care arrangements	See day care services.
care-giver	a) Member of staff attending young children in a day care centre. b) Adult responsible for upbringing of a young child or children.
caretaker	See care-giver. Also member of staff attending young children in an institution such as an orphanage.
child care	See day care services.
child care centre	See day care centre.
day care	See day care services.
day care centre	A centre which cares for a group of children (usually 5 or more) aged from birth to school age, on a full or part-day basis. "Such centres normally operate from 7.00 or 7.30 in the morning through to 5.30 or 6.00 in the evening and are usually open for 49 or 50 weeks a year. The number and age-range of children in a centre varies" (the Fry Report (1974, p.34).
day care services	Full day care and education services for pre-school aged children. It includes day care centres and family day-care services.
early childhood centres	Day care and sessional pre-school centres.
early childhood education	Education for children 0-8 years old with emphasis on pre-school years, in particular 3-5 years.
early childhood services	This term is used to cover both day care services and sessional pre-school and also encompasses advisory and other support services.

education — This includes the fostering of social, emotional and intellectual development and implies skilful and deliberate effort to provide appropriate experiences for the child. "Although there is no universal agreement about the nature of education, it is generally regarded as the process by which each individual is initiated into the modes of thought and conduct of the society to which he or she belongs. As the pattern of culture in that society changes, adaptability and new learning is required. Education is therefore seen as being also a preparation for life-long adaption to change, both within the person and in the social and physical environment. This process does not start at some point arbitrarily determined as the entry to formal schooling; it starts at birth" (the Fry Report (1974, p.21).

family day care — This can be organised in a number of different ways. "In the main, family day-care services are provided in neighbourhood domestic situations, where a small number of children (usually no more than five including any pre-school age children of the Home Mother) are cared for in each home, which in turn is part of an organised system. This system provides trained staff and some equipment to support and help the family day-care mother" (the Fry Report (1974, p.35).

home care — Young children are reared in the home.

nursery school — In the U.K. and U.S., nursery schools are akin to the Australian sessional pre-school centre. However, certain day care centres in New South Wales, in which the full-time services of a trained pre-school teacher are used, are called nursery schools (Social Welfare Commission 1974, p.15).

play-group — Usually refers to any group of mothers "who meet regularly in homes or halls to provide enriching experiences for their children in the 0-5 age group" (Social Welfare Commission 1974, p.80).

pre-school education	Education for children 0-5 years in Australia (except in Western Australias where it is 0-6 years) before commencement of primary school. The emphasis is on children 3 to 5-years-old.
pre-school centre (sessional)	This usually provides a half-day (2½ to 3 hours) program, referred to as "a session" or an extended program (up to 5 or 6 hours) for children 3-5 years of age. Children may attend between two and five sessions per week. It normally operates only during school term-time and the most common staffing pattern is one teacher and one assistant for a maximum of 25 children per session.
toddlers groups	These provide for children from 18 months to about 3 years of age. "In general, mothers are required to be in attendance, groups are limited to 3-10 children and sessions are provided for about two hours weekly or fortnightly" (Social Welfare Commission 1974, p.82).